Love-Letters of Famous Men and Women

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No. 5

May
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The Golden Book Magazine

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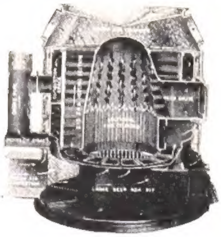

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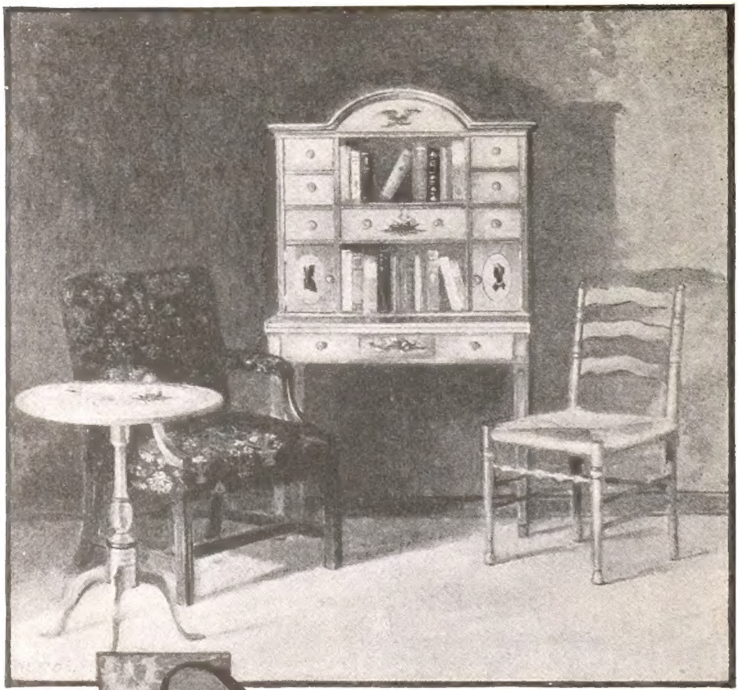

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VOLUME I
Number 5

MAY
1925

THE GOLDEN BOOK MAGAZINE

OF FICTION AND TRUE STORIES THAT WILL LIVE

Edited by HENRY WYSHAM LANIER

Editorial Board:
WM. LYON PHELPS · STUART P. SHERMAN · JOHN COTTON DANA · CHAS. MILLS GAYLEY

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Some Persons of Importance

EARLY one January morning of 1892 a boy of sixteen reported for duty as a cub reporter on the daily paper of Paducah, Kentucky, "one of those border-state towns that Northern people call Southern, and far Southern people call Western." It was a paper with one reporter, four editors, and five editorial writers.

[He has related that he was most embarrassed and nervous; also that he was a lank and gangling youngster: let it be recorded; for these attributes are no more.]

Boss Jim's brother, the editor, opened a drawer and handed him "one of those old-fashioned red-cedar pencils with a vein of slate running through its center"; an important leather-backed note-book was already reposing in the novice's pocket; and he was bidden to go out and find some news.

Outside, the street which had always before throbbed with life and movement, seemed to have become as cold and empty as an open grave. Disconsolately he wandered about; a large part of the day was spent in resharpening the slaty-hearted pencil. But from a group of hucksters, shivering at their stalls in the market's open shed, he did secure an item, which appeared that evening in the Local Notes, as a buffer between rival patent medicine reading notices:

"Cal Evans, the efficient and popular market master, says there were more rabbits brought to the local market this week than any week this winter. Molly Cottontails sold this morning for ten cents dressed or five cents undressed."

That was the first "story" by Irvin Shrewsbury Cobb.

In three years he was editing the paper. Then he conducted the "Sour Mash" column in the Louisville *Evening Post;* presently graduated into humourist-in-chief, first of the New York *Sun,* then of the *Evening World;* and next became successively the feature contributor of two of our most widely circulated magazines.

Two of his plays had been produced before he took up magazine work; in the thirteen succeeding years he has turned out four more plays and some twenty-five books, and has achieved the dignities of a ten-volume collected subscription set—and an autobiography, "Myself to Date."

One is tempted to follow the Rotarian model for securing impressiveness, and figure out just how far all those newspaper and magazine and book columns would reach, placed end to end. But perhaps it's almost as important to note that some of the characters and descriptions in them reached the heart and the sense of humour of a very large section of our reading public. Any man who could write the ten tales of Judge Priest, "Fightin' Billy," in "Back Home," must be credited with adding a new and delightful real American to the gallery of fiction realities.

Mr. Cobb declares that the original impulse of those tales came from his conviction that the Southerner of fiction was mainly a figment of the imagination; and even in such a tale as "One Block from Fifth Avenue" his own knowledge of his own people is as striking as the kindly yet searching fun of his outlook on life. When Eddie Sockett rescues his Letty from the maw of New York, declaring she's "too good for this damn town," while shaping in his mind the telegram to the home paper announcing their wedding at the bride's "studio apartment"—oh, well, if you do know, you know just where he comes from.

* * *

Mr. Victor L. Whitechurch has published at least five books: that many have come across the water, beginning in 1911 with "A Canon in Residence," which made a distinctly successful impression. Yet the current books of biographical reference, here and in England, do not take the least cognizance of his existence.

He ran a series of stories last year in *Blackwood's*, called "The Adventures of Capt. Ivan Koravitch," which are not only admirable tales of dramatic happenings, but contain some very shrewd bits of character drawing and humour.

One feels that the expatriated and experienced Russian Captain must have really existed. Anyhow, if he didn't—he does now.

* * *

"A Lodging for the Night" was Stevenson's first published story. He had been called to the bar in 1875, but forsook the law, as he had forsaken engineering, before really starting in it—at the insistent urge of the impulse to write.

There has been much discussion of late as to Tusitala's place in literature, and some progressive minds have discovered that he was after all neither a truly great nor a creative writer. As Eleanor Hoyt's French restaurant keeper observed, when Madam declared that the charming young girl who had loved unwisely and tragically was gone to hell—"As for me, I do not know: it is my wife who has ze information."

But I do know that after forty-eight years this tale of the poet-thief, with which Stevenson made his bow to the reading world, offers as sure entertainment as if it were quite new. And it might be interesting to compare this first effort with any of the tens of thousands of stories which have appeared in magazines in the last quarter-century, say: how many have there been, for instance, which have more chance of being read avidly by your children, or their children, twenty-five years from now?

I rather think that until men change their natures most radically, they will always take down a volume by Robert Louis with a thrill of anticipation, with a certainty that they can leave everything to the performer, and abandon themselves to the pleasure of a well-told tale worth telling.

If that is not being a great fiction writer—we might perhaps pray for more of such in place of those to whom these superior critics boldly affix the label of greatness.

* * *

"Caran d'Ache" (from the Russian for lead-pencil) was the pseudonym adopted by the artist Emmanuel Poiré, born at Moscow in 1858; he died in Paris, where most of his life was spent, in 1909. His ambition was to be a military painter, and he made serious illustrations for a number of books; but it was chiefly his comic pictorial serials and current cartoons which made him universally known in Paris. His humour was never so mordant as Forain's, but it was at times even more irresistible.

* * *

In 1642, young Jean Baptiste Pocquelin, aged twenty, accompanied his royal master, Louis XIII, to Provence, having succeeded to his father's post of *valet tapissier*, charged with the cares and arrangement of the furnishings of the King's quarters.

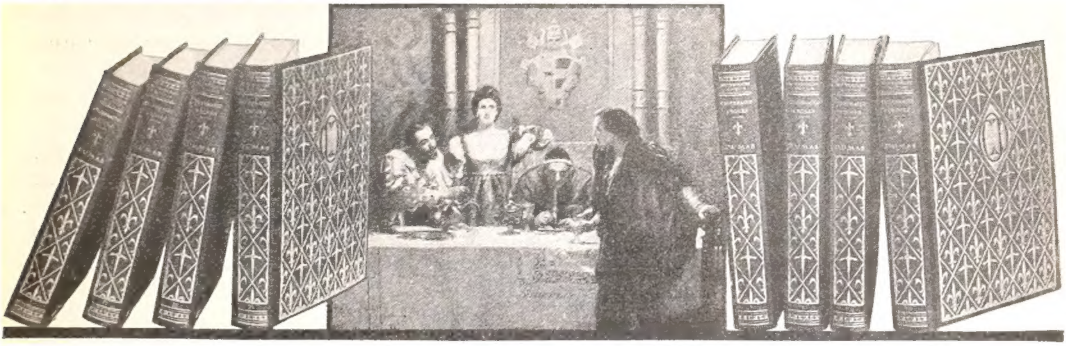
At the end of that year he resigned his office, hired a tennis-court with a few friends, and started The Famous Theatre, adopting for some reason the surname of Molière, which was destined, along with everything connected with him, to become truly famous in succeeding generations. The company was forced by lack of patronage to leave Paris and start on a barn-storming tour; and it was fully ten years later that the actor-playwright produced his own first comedy, "The Rattle-pate," at Lyons.

In 1658, this was played before the King, and even Molière's enemies had to admit its instant success, though they ascribed it to the acting. "The Pretentious Ladies" followed next year—and the author was fairly launched on the career which placed him as the great comic dramatist of his time—for this was the first true satire of everyday foibles seen on the French stage; and from that day to this Molière's fame has been secure.

"The Flying Doctor" is one of the least known of his plays: parts of it were later used in "The Doctor in Spite of Himself."

(*Continued on page 8*)

A Glass of Wine with the Borgias



The youth hesitates, hand on glass. Will he obey the imperious look of command in the eyes of the beautiful Lucrezia—the magnet that has drawn him to this supper in the pontifical apartment? Will he yield to the ingratiating advances of Cæsar Borgia and partake of the proffered cup? Or will he be warned before it is too late by the sinister glance shot from the cruel eyes of the old Pontiff as he coldly calculates the destruction of the young gallant?

To comply or refuse is equally hazardous. If he decline the poisoned draught will he escape the knife of the hired assassin even now lurking in the shadows of the papal palace?

Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI), Lucrezia and Cæsar formed the diabolical trinity which sat for eleven years upon the papal throne in Rome, an impious parody of the Holy Trinity—the most perfect incarnation of evil that ever existed on earth. How many gallant lives thus darkly and without commotion passed out of sight, whirled away by the headlong torrent of the ambition of that terrible triumvirate, is told as only that great weaver of word pictures, Alexandre Dumas, could tell in

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(*Continued from page 6*)

Antonio Fogazzaro (1842–1911) was one of the most distinguished literary figures of modern Italy. Two of his novels, "The Saint" and "Leila," were condemned by the Catholic Church because the author ventured to elaborate the spiritual reforms which he felt the Church must experience in order to realize its ideals.

But nothing could be further from his sympathies than most of the doctrines and methods of the radicals who hailed him as a powerful adherent. He was musician, poet, æsthete, mystic—a man of sensitive yet powerful feelings, with an aristocratic background: and it was his own social class in which he was mainly interested, though there is a wealth of comedy in the minor "low life" characters. His work is pervaded with charm, yet it is full of situations of true dramatic force. We shall publish some other characteristic tales by him later on.

* * *

The death of James Lane Allen on February 18, following that of George W. Cable on January 31, made a large gap in the literary group which held the place of honour in America a generation back. He had expressed the peculiar quality of Kentucky, as Cable had of New Orleans, Thomas Nelson Page and F. Hopkinson Smith of old-time Virginia, and Joel Chandler Harris of everyday Middle Georgia.

A re-reading of Allen's "A Kentucky Cardinal," for the first time since its appearance in 1895, brought a distinct surprise at its quality. It had become somewhat the fashion among our younger progressives to sneer a bit at Allen as sentimental and old-maidish, and rather beneath the notice of a generation able to digest mental raw meat and wood alcohol—not to mention a degree of putrescence which only Eskimos can stomach in bodily diet.

But I can't think of any living author in these United States who might not well feel proud to sign his name to that story—sensitive and withdrawing, yes; but full of real feeling, charming humour, and a palpitating freshness that delights one as does spring's unfolding. We are hoping to present this as a short serial later on; meanwhile we print the tale of "King Solomon," a forgotten bit of human flotsam whose history Mr. Allen rescued and embodied in a story of moving appeal.

One secret of Mr. Allen's permanence was that he took time. He came to New York in 1886, after having been professor of Latin and higher English at Bethany College, and for nearly forty years devoted himself to writing. Yet his entire output was only eighteen volumes, and several of these, like "A Kentucky Cardinal" and "Aftermath," were but novelette length. He had an instinct for perfection; and a correct sense, too, that those more subtle ideas and emotions which pierce the heart deeply can only attain true expression in unhurried quiet.

* * *

Margaret Deland always seems to me to have a rare combination of ability to feel like a woman, and think like a man.

Certainly, there was no lack of "emotional content" in "The Awakening of Helena Richie." But always she seems to preserve a clear logical outlook, an inevitable sense of cause and effect, which makes the experiences of her characters a part of actual life, being lived about us.

Moreover, it is a real achievement to build up a man, like Dr. Lavendar, who appears in so many of her tales, in whom is embodied so attractive an ideal of practical working Christianity.

Mrs. Deland's first book was a little volume of poems, "The Old Garden." Then, in 1888, "John Ward, Preacher," aroused something of the same excitement as was caused by "Robert Elsmere"; and in the years since she has kept steadily on, expressing in novels, stories and essays her interest in life's realities, and her shrewd understanding of human foibles. There are many thousands of Americans to whom her Old Chester folk have long been entertaining companions; and a good many have actually found sign-posts on their own route in life from the course of events in her chronicles.

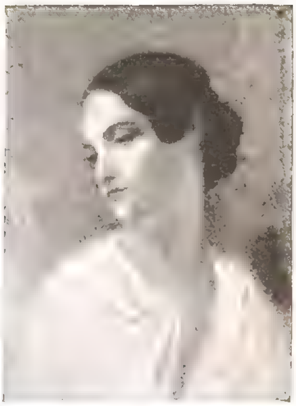
(*Continued on page 10*)

The supreme love, *and the supreme tragedy* of Poe's life

IN his hauntingly beautiful poem "Annabel Lee," Edgar Allan Poe immortalized his love for his child wife, the gentle, delicate creature whose devotion furnished the one bright chapter in his ill-starred life. And even in this, the tragedy which seemed to dog his every step came to rob him of his happiness.

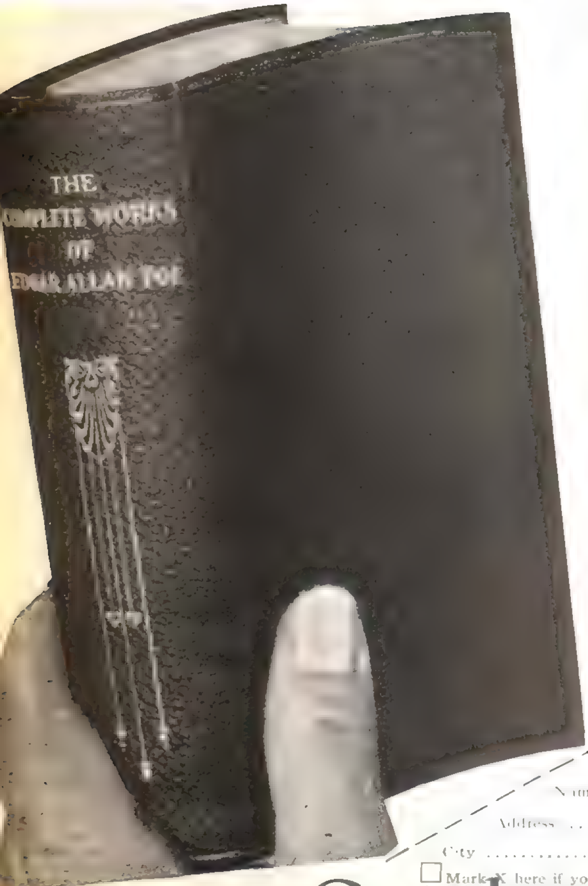
> . . . "*the wind came out of the cloud by night,*
> *chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.*"

Never was there a more unhappy mortal than Poe. Wretched in his death as in his life, he never dreamed that his bust would one day stand in the Hall of Fame!



Poe's wife, Virginia, the inspiration of "Annabel Lee," from the water color sketch by A. G. Learned. She shared Poe's bitter poverty to the end, dying in the little Fordham cottage that has since become a shrine for worshippers of Poe.

All of Poe now in ONE Volume!



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(*Continued from page 8*)

Pedro de Novo Calson was the founder, and for many years the editor of the *Diario Espagnol* in Havana. In his later period he wrote many tales of naval life.

"Makar Chudra" (published in this issue under the title of "The Gipsy") was Maxim Gorki's first story. Small wonder that when it appeared in the *Kavkaz*, in 1892, discerning critics realized that a new author had arrived who must be reckoned with. For it is as vivid and elemental as a flash of lightning over the boundless steppes at night.

Gorki's real name is Alexei Maximovich Pyeshkov. His own life explains much in his writings which seems at times needlessly horrible, depressing and repellent—to one whose "struggle" has been to get along in ordinary business competition.

His father was a dyer in Nizhni-Novgorod. The boy was left an orphan at the age of nine, and started to earn his living in a boot-shop. He soon ran away from this and tried his hand at a dozen occupations—scullion, gardener, painter of ikons, watchman, baker, porter, apple-vendor. He saw life in its grimmest aspects; and his tales of tramps, of hopeless wrecks, of outcasts of both sexes, are drawn from the people among whom he starved and begged and fought his way upward.

It is natural enough that his favourite character should be the man in revolt against society; that his pen should drip vitriol and spread wildfire when he frees his heart on the injustices and cruelties of things as they are only too often in our modern civilization. Indeed, he seems to have been a being marked for tragedy: his American journey was a total failure because of his frank contempt for society's conventions as to marriage; and to-day his situation in Russia is exceedingly precarious because he has not hesitated to express his dissatisfaction at some of the Bolshevik theories and practice.

However distasteful the man's grim realism may be to some of us in its baldest aspects, one cannot fail to recognize both his power and the aspiration which underlies all this. For his play, "At the Lowest Depths," voices his central conviction: that life as it is is worse than any future hell ever imagined—unless man has an ideal that lifts him above its brutalities.

H. W. L.

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A department offering its services without charge to readers of THE GOLDEN BOOK. All letters to the Bureau are treated as personal and confidential and are answered in full by mail. Below appear a few extracts from recent correspondence relating to subjects of general interest. Address Investment Bureau, THE GOLDEN BOOK, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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The Uses of Diversification

By the Investment Editor

An old investor will tell you there is nothing "absolutely safe." He speaks from experience. He was caught in the collapse in farm values of the early nineties, or some of his farm mortgages have gone into default since the war. He has had stocks or bonds of industrial companies that were unable to weather the post-war re-adjustments, or he was at one time a confident believer in New Haven or St. Paul rai way securities.

He has learned that it does not pay to be too confident regarding any securities. Even governments go into the discard and carry their securities with them. He has learned to protect himself, as far as it is possible, against the unforseeable uncertainties of investment by distributing his funds among various types of securities. He knows that in wide diversification there is greater safety. The new and less experienced investor should profit by his experience and follow his example.

But some new investor will ask: "How is a man with a small amount of money going to practise this fine principle of diversification?" It is, in fact, easier for the man or woman with a very small sum than for those with more. They can put it in a savings bank, the safety of which is based on a diversified list of high grade securities. By combining the small savings of many people and buying a great variety of securities these institutions secure diversification for all. There is no better place to commence the accumulation of savings. They can be added to at any time and are readily available in case of an emergency. The savings bank is one of the best places to accumulate and keep a rainy day fund.

Another excellent example of the uses of diversification is the insurance company. A brief study of the annual report of any well managed insurance company is a good lesson in diversification. The number of issues in which the funds of its policy holders are invested will surprise anyone who is not familiar with the methods of insurance company investment. If individual investors would practice such diversification their losses would be few and easily overcome.

Mr. Lawrence Chamberlain, author of "Principles of Bond Investment," has summed up the value of diversification in relation to the safety of investments in this way:

"If an investor has $10,000 equally divided among ten investments that are 90 per cent. safe and yield 6 per cent. and one of them becomes worthless, then, by ploughing in his income for two years, he will have more than restored the principal sum.

"He might debate the preferability of putting the entire $10,000 into some one 'perfectly safe investment'; but if the Allies had lost the war probably he would have agreed with many thousands of owners of British consols and French rentes that there is no such animal."

The man with less than $10,000 to invest can secure equal diversification by the purchase of $500 or even $100 bonds. There are now plenty of these small denomination bonds available in the market. And it would be a good plan for any investor with more than a few thousand to invest to include some good stocks in his list. When living costs go up, stocks, as a rule, earn and pay more in dividends, while bonds, bearing a fixed interest, decline in value because of the decrease in the purchasing power of their interest return.

Harvard University, for example, has its general funds, or did a few years ago, divided about 80 per cent. in bonds and 20 per cent. in stocks. In times of inflation, as in 1919, these stocks paid extra dividends which helped the University to meet higher operating costs. In times of depression some of the stocks may fail to pay, but the large backlog of bonds will keep this loss from being seriously felt at such times. To fit these peculiar conditions more than a third of the stocks were in the industrial field, where prosperity is greatest in boom times. The bonds were divided as follows: railroads, 29 per cent.; public utility, 26 per cent.; real estate mortgages, 17 per cent.; industrial, 15 per cent.; traction, 8 per cent. and government 4 per cent.

Mistakes which investors make in this matter of diversification come to light repeatedly and oftentimes the fault lies with the investment house with which they are dealing. A man in California, who had $2,000 invested in bonds and another $1,000 waiting to be invested, wrote as follows: "I have read quite a bit lately about diversification and am afraid I made a mistake in putting my $2,000 into two $1,000 Cuban sugar bonds, but did so on the advice of the salesman from whom I bought them."

That salesman was short-sighted. He not only lo

(*Continued on page 14*)

How Much Richer are You Today Than Your Widow May be Tomorrow?

A $500,000 estate taxed $ 97,000
A $400,000 estate taxed $152,000
A $100,000 estate taxed $ 24,300

These are a few actual results of failure to provide against the inheritance taxes now levied by forty-six states. Those estates contained securities which were taxable by many different States, aside from the State of residence and the Federal estate tax. *

How heavily will these taxes fall upon the fortune that your own efforts and sacrifice have built up? Will they come at a time when it is impossible to raise cash to meet them without danger to your entire estate?

There is only one way to find out. Have your security holdings analyzed as soon as possible by a competent legal authority or by a bank or investment house which offers an inheritance tax service. *Delay may be costly.*

The William R. Compton Company considers this an essential part of the service which we give to investors. We recently suggested a rearrangement of security holdings for one of our clients whereby his inheritance taxes will be reduced $34,000. Upon our recommendation, he exchanged certain security holdings which would be heavily taxed in three or more States, for other investments taxable only by the Federal Government and by his State of residence. And his present holdings combine greater safety and a higher net yield than those which he exchanged for them.

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(*Continued from page 12*)

the confidence of that investor but did harm to the reputation of the house for which he was working. It had plenty of other good bonds on its list from which better diversification could have been secured for the California investor.

Some of the real estate mortgage bond houses, which of course have but one class of security to sell, are violators of this principle of diversification. One or two of them have attempted to convince investors that by purchasing their bonds secured on properties located in different parts of the United States they will meet all the requirements for diversification and need to buy nothing else. But as these bonds depend somewhat on the continued success of the issuing house the investment of all of one's funds in the offerings of one such house would give less diversification than the placing of the funds in any other single field of investment.

A man in South Dakota had the right idea about this matter of diversification. He wrote: "I read with considerable interest your articles and advice. It occurs to me that I can improve upon my investments by diversifying them—both as to character and location. I have the following: About $15,000 invested in 1st mortgages on town property in this city; about $10,000 invested in 1st mortgages on South Dakota farm land; $2,500 in U. S. Government Bonds and $5,500 in General Fund County Road Warrants. The mortgages above referred to bear from 5½ to 8 per cent. and knowing the country and security as I do, I feel that they are safe, yet, as they mature it occurs to me that I should put a portion of this money in other than farm and city mortgage fields."

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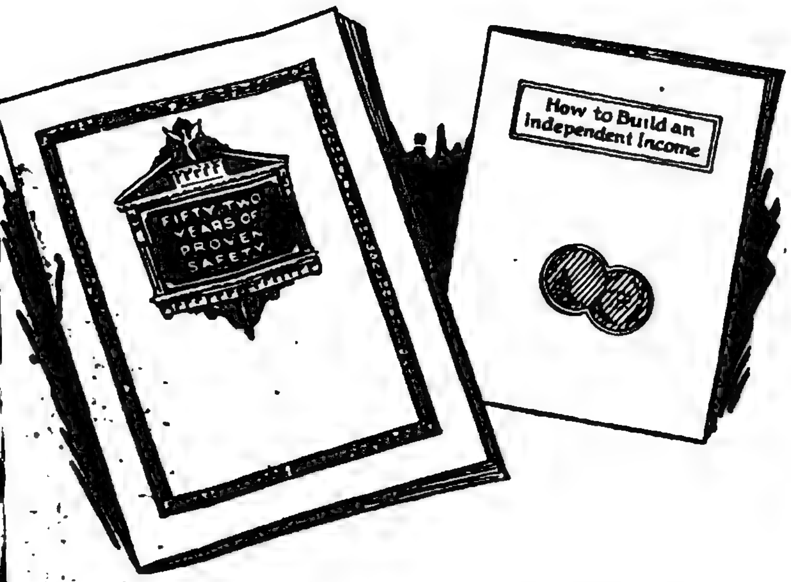
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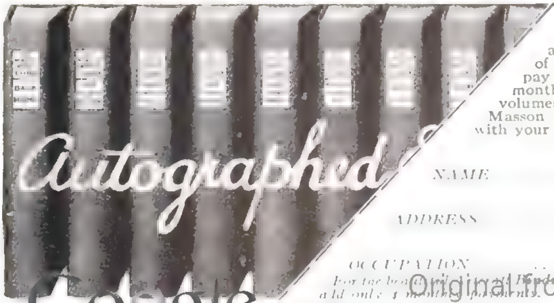

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The Sword of Humour

AN EPITAPH

Here Stanford lies, who thought it odd
That he should go to meet his God.
He looked, until his eyes grew dim,
For God to hasten to meet him. AMBROSE BIERCE.

* * *

When Major-General Pope, in 1862, with a reputation for activity and getting results, took command of the Army of Virginia, his first despatches to Washington were headed grandiloquently "Headquarters in the Saddle." Prof. Basil L. Gildesleeve in Richmond is said to have always thereafter referred to him as "the general whose headquarters were where his hindquarters ought to be."

* * *

In the days when Thomas C. Platt was the "easy" but absolute boss of New York, word once went out that Timothy E. Woodruff was slated for the Republican nomination for Governor. The reporters hurried to question Mr. Platt, the rumour being, from one point of view, rather sensational. The boss listened to their rapid-fire questions, and said nothing.

"But how about it, Mr. Platt?"

"Oh, well," he answered, "I hardly think the situation has tapered down to Tim yet."

* * *

WHEN LEFRANC DE POMPIGNON ISSUED HIS "SACRED POETRY"

Do you know why Jeremiah
Wept so much, with grief so dire?
As prophet, he knew he was fated
By Lefranc to be translated. VOLTAIRE.

* * *

IN ITALY

She was so thin that her full face looked like a profile, and a sigh in her bosom was visible before it rose. HEINE.

* * *

THE JOHNSONIAN BROADSWORD

He had argued at length with a pertinacious gentleman, and at last his opponent said: "I don't understand you, sir." "Sir," retorted Dr. Johnson, "I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

* * *

"I wish I were as sure of anything as Macaulay is of everything." WINDHAM.

* * *

"Who gives this woman away?" says the clergyman, in the half empty, dim-lighted church. "I could," whispers a voice away down the darkling aisle. HENRY WATTERSON.

* * *

A poet once asked John Philpot Curran if he had seen his "Descent into Hell."

"No," said Curran, "but I should be delighted to see it." PEEL.

The Booklover's Calendar.

He has a most hard heart that does not love in May.
ROMAN DE LA ROSE.

ROMAN: Maius, from the "maiores" (ancestors) to whose ashes gifts were offered on the festival of Lemures, the 9th, 11th, and 13th. The Ambarvalia came on the 29th, with offerings (originally to Mars, then to Ceres) for prosperity of household, cattle and crops: bulls, sheep and pigs were driven three times around the farmer's fields, and then sacrificed.

MOHAMMEDAN: May 1 is the 7th of Shawwal; on the 24th begins Zu'l-Qa'dah, one of the sacred months when Muslims are forbidden to fight.

HEBREW: Iyar continues till the 23d; then begins Sivan.

MOON is full on 8th, new on 22nd. Morning stars, Jupiter, and Mercury after 16th. Evening stars, Venus, Mars and Saturn.

AMERICAN INDIAN: Planting Moon.

HINDU: Parts of Vaishakh and Jeshtha, the former propitious and devoted to Krishna; Vinayak, protector of the poor, was incarnated on its full-moon day, when the Tortoise birth of Vishnu is also celebrated.

PERSIAN: The month Khurdad, named after one of the Zoroastrian angels.

JAPANESE: Uzuki, the Hare month; or Mugi-aki, the wheat harvest. The Yasukuni festival, for those killed in battle, comes on the 6th; the birth of Buddha is celebrated on the 8th.

ZODIACAL and CHINESE: Signs of Taurus and Gemini; Stations of the Hen and Monkey.

1 *May Day. Addison born, 1672. Dryden died, 1700. Celtic festival of Beltein when fires were kindled on hilltops at night.*

Forth goeth all the court,
Both most and least,
To fetch the flowers fresh.
CHAUCER.

2 *Leonardo da Vinci died, 1520.*
I shall never forget the delight felt on first seeing a Maypole.
IRVING.

3 *Machiavelli born, 1469; Le Sage, 1668. Hood died, 1845.*
In London . . . we usually see a small band, composed of two or three men in fantastic dresses, one smartly dressed female glittering with spangles, and a strange figure called Jack-in-the-green, being a man concealed within a tall frame of herbs and flowers, with a flag at top. CHAMBERS.

4 *Audubon born, 1782.*
What's not destroy'd by Time's relentless hand?
Where's Troy?—and where the Maypole in the Strand? ANON, (1800).

5 *Napoleon died, 1821.*
I'll bestow Sir Thomas Overbury's Milk-maid's wish upon her (pretty Maudlin), "That she may die in the spring, and being dead, may have good store of flowers stuck around about her winding-sheet." IZAAK WALTON.

6 (1846) His grace the Duke of Beaufort has requested the whole of his regiment, "The Royal Gloucestershire Geomanry Cavalry," to let their moustachios grow for the permanent duty which will commence the 16th of May next.
EXETER AND PLYMOUTH GAZETTE.

7 This day, 1227, Queen Blanche, Regent of France, established the Tribute of Roses, to commemorate the transformation through love of young Count de la Marche.

8 *Buddha born.*
Now is the sacred time
Buddha was born into a world
Of ignorance and crime. ROKUSO.

9 *Schiller died, 1805.*
Colonel Blood, 1671, with two companions stole the royal English crown, orb and sceptre from the Tower. Captured at the wharf, he exclaimed: "It was a gallant attempt, however unsuccessful!"

10 The New England military forces were temporarily disbanded, 1676, by Court order, because of the ravages of an "epidemical cold."
SILL.

11 My Lady Gerrard treated us at Mulberry Garden, now the only place of refreshment about the town for persons of the best quality to be exceedingly cheated at. . . . I now observed how women began to paint themselves. EVELYN (1654).

12 "And what ails ye at the May east wind?" said the shepherd. "It is so bitterly disagreeable. . . ." "And what good can you say of it?" enquired Lord Rutherford. "Weel, it dries the gird, it slackens the ewes, and it's God's wull." CHAMBERS.

13 Rainy days will surely come,
Take your friend's umbrella home. ANON.

Old May Day.

14 *ON THE WAY TO FETCH CHARLES II HOME*
Mr. Creed and I went in the fore-part of a coach wherein were two very pretty ladies, very fashionable and with black patches, who very merrily sang all the way and that very well, and were very free to kiss the two blades that were with them. I took out my flageolet and piped. PEPYS.

15 Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire.
MILTON.

16 To pick the Mayflower is like following in the footsteps of some spendthrift army, which has scattered the contents of its treasure-chest among beds of scented moss.
HIGGINSON.

17 *Rogation Sunday. Heloise died, 1163.*

You possessed, indeed, two qualities—a tone of voice, and a grace in singing—which gave you power over every feminine heart.
HELOISE to ABELARD.

18 *Perrault died, 1703; Hawthorne, 1864; Meredith, 1909.*

Use May, while that you may,
For May has but his time;
When all the fruit is gone, it is
Too late the tree to climb.
RICHARD EDWARDS.

19 *Boswell died, 1795.*

When I thought her my own, ah! too short seemed the day
For a jaunt to Dounpatrick, or a trip on the sea.
JAMES BOSWELL.

20 *Dürer born, 1471.*

Be your fair mouth filled with honey and the honeycomb, good Thyrsis . . . for sure your singing is as delightful as the crickets chirping in May.
THEOCRITUS.

21 *Ascension Day. Maria Edgeworth born, 1849.*

To-day I tramp along
In silence, for no hymn of mine
Could match the spring wind's song.
RYOTA.

22 *Pope born, 1688.*

If proverbs weigh with you, people say that May is the month to marry bad wives.
OVID.

23 *Savonarola burnt, 1498.*

Give 'em but a May-pole . . . 'tis meat, drink, washing and lodging to 'em.
LAURENCE STERNE.

24 *Linnæus born, 1707.*

Oh! May sits crowned with hawthorn flower,
And is love's month, they say;
And Love's the fruit that is ripened best
By ladies' eyes in May.
ROSSETTI.

25 (Lord's Day). To trimming (shaving) myself, which I have this week done every morning, with a pumice stone.
PEPYS.

26 *The Venerable Bede died, 735; Pepys, 1703; Haydn, 1809.*

In the spring the world's a-breeding, in the spring the world's all sweet buds, and our days are as long as our nights, and our nights as our days.
BION.

27 *Dante born, 1265. Calvin died, 1564; Noah Webster, 1843.*

Button to chin
Till May be in;
Cast not a clout
Till May be out.
OLD ENGLISH PROVERB.

28 *Thomas Moore born, 1780. Whitsunday term (since 1881): Flitting Day in Scotland.*

These mornings impress me indescribably. They intoxicate me, they carry me away. I feel beguiled out of myself, dissolved in sunbeams, breezes, perfumes, and sudden impulses of joy.
AMIEL.

29 *Oak Apple-day.*

To come, in a waste piece of tangled woods . . . on the wild-apple in bloom is to know one of the most thrilling experiences of the Spring.
FIONA MACLEOD.

30 *Joan of Arc burnt, 1431. Pope died, 1744; Voltaire, 1778; King Arthur died, 542.*

The May twilight, the tender young greenery . . . the scent of the lilac, the buzzing of the insects, the stillness, the warmth—how fresh and marvellous it all is, though spring is repeated every year.
CHEKHOV.

31 *Whitsunday. Cotswold Games. Charlotte Brontë died, 1855.*

Slender: How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotswold.
SHAKESPEARE.

Philomela

The
Golden Book
Magazine

VOLUME I MAY, 1925 NUMBER 5

One Block From Fifth Avenue

By IRVIN S. COBB

Irvin S. Cobb

WHIPPOORWILLVILLE is one of those places where the train stops twenty minutes for dinner and the passengers who take a chance have from ten to fifteen minutes to spare, dependent on how game they are. This gives them a chance to see the business district. They can see it in five minutes, or four, if they hurry, which allows ample time for them to get back on board and start wondering what the delay is all about before the locomotive comes to and goes on about its business.

To give you a further idea: No set of souvenir postcards showing views in and around Whippoorwillville has yet been printed, and the popular excitement throughout the country caused by the Eskimo pie had practically abated nearly everywhere else in the South-Central states before it even reached here.

The town never had a boom. Its population increases very slowly and only because, as the vital statistics covering any healthful community will show, there are more births than there are deaths. Rarely does anything new go up, but occasionally something old falls down. In fact, Whippoorwillville is what you would call a finished town. Enlarging the fact, you might say it has been finished since the Civil War. The biggest thing that ever happened there was a clash between Union home guards and Confederate partisan rangers, raiding in for horses and recruits. This happened the fall after Fort Sumter was fired on, but the older citizens speak of it as though it had occurred within these past few months. But the biggest thing of recent years was when Letty Ember went to New York to prosecute her art studies in that great center of culture and artistic endeavour.

Letty Ember was Whippoorwillville's acknowledged child of genius. She was its only such, so naturally her going away made talk beforehand and left a void afterward. Herself, she could not remember when the urge of her gift first came to her. It was of record in the family that almost from her cradle days on she had been, as the word is, "different." While other little girls were playing Lady-come-to-see and cutting

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out paper dolls she drew pictures of things and painted them with water colors. A paint box containing an assortment of pale lozenge-looking slabs and some very limber camel's hair-brushes with quills for handles and two little mixing dishes like large white china buttons with the thread holes left out of them, was at six her most treasured possession. At school on Friday afternoons she was the one who was sent to the blackboard to write out mottoes and surround them with scrolls in red and white chalks. In a somewhat later period she won first prize at the Denton County Fair "for the best strictly original work of art executed by a resident of the county." Her offering was a study in oils—she had progressed by now to the stronger and more enduring medium—a fruit piece showing apricots, pears, grapes and a slice of an exceedingly ripe watermelon grouped on a marble slab. She was sixteen then and her father was postmaster under the second Wilson administration and they lived in one of the largest houses in town; the one with the two wooden cupolas on it and a railing around the roof, it being the same house which an architect from Boston, passing through on his way to Kansas City and seeing it from the car window, had said must certainly be the real Crime of 'Seventy-three.

When this honor came to Letty Ember, bestirring her ambition for achievements yet higher, she absolutely was self-taught; had never had a lesson. Her father was forever saying that one of these days he was going to send Letty off somewhere to study under a regular professional painter. But he never got round to it. There were several things he never got quite round to—taking out more life insurance, for one thing, and cleaning the dead stock out of his drug store and putting in a soda fountain and paying off his notes in the Dentondale bank. Death caught up with him while he had all of these projects still vaguely in mind. Letty was just past twenty when diabetes overtook the loiterer.

Meanwhile, those four years between her sixteenth birthday and her twentieth had not been wasted. The walls of the Ember home attested her industry and her versatility. For the most part her canvases, inclosed in scrolled and shiny frames, were copies of what might be called standard subjects—Spearing Salmon on the Columbia River, the Monarch of the Glen, Our Darlings, the Grand Canal (Venice) at Sunset, Pompeiian Flower Girl, Kittens at Play, Pharoah's Chariot Horses.

She was that bad!

She was worse than that. She had no part of talent in her, but only a laborious knack for laborious imitation. Had there been in her a single smoldering tiny spark of the fire called inspiration she would somehow have guessed a way through her ignorance and isolation, through her lack of craftsmanship even, to the rights of things. All about her were beauties that cried aloud in their loneliness for an artist to catch them and hold them in his webs of color—the neighbourly foothills in wintertimes under snow; the jade-green river bottoms in the spring; the woods in the fall, with the hickories yellowing up and the ash purpling and the sour-gum dripping leaves like drops of blood where it had been bitten in Jack Frost's first attack; bits of dusty roadside of the summer, when the wilted mullein lolled out its furred tongues to show how poorly it stood the heat, and the "niggerheads" brocaded the shoulders of the turnpike with golden epaulettes; darky types and town characters and awkwardly picturesque country folks; faces, shapes, figures; shadows and lights and moods—on every side, tendering themselves to her in a spendthrift prodigality. But she could not see them; the eyes of her soul were blinded to their wealth and their variety. Besides, there was nobody to tell her. So she went on desecrating ells of good cloth-weave with blobs of misused pigments. And Whippoorwillville's commonplace judgment held her as one favored beyond the ordinary daughters of ordinary men.

She went on so and thus until her father forevermore put aside all earthly consideration of those unstarted plans of his. Her mother already was dead. She was the mistress of her own acts thenceforward and the estate which had been left by the lately deceased was hers now to do with as she might devise. It was not much of an estate. When the funeral had been paid for and the just debts settled there was put into her hands a total amounting to slightly less than eleven hundred dollars. For the carrying out of her purpose she figured, though, it would be enough—if she stinted and stretched her pennies. To be sure there was the heavy item of her consolidated entrance fees and her student dues for the first quarter; these would necessitate a seriously large outlay at the very beginning. But with her native abilities and her willingness to work hard she should go ahead fast and go ahead far. For any immediate privations she would be bountifully repaid in a few months, or in a year or two, at most, when there came to her recognition, honours, repute. You must excuse her for her vanity. For so far back as her memory ran she had been fed on the honest praise and honest loyalty of a community where local pride made up for many things lacking.

Naturally, Whippoorwillville, considered as a whole, approved of her decision. Eddie Sackett did not, it is true; but then, Eddie Sackett scarcely counted, he being as one against many. For his part, he selfishly desired that Letty should bide where she was and keep on being engaged to him. He wrote the Whippoorwillville Notes for the *Dentondale Weekly Sun-Independent*, which paid him six dollars a week, and he made fifteen dollars a week more as depot agent. He had prospects of a raise in salary; the railroad had shown signs of being not unmindful of faithful service and painstaking attention to details. On the enhanced income, he figured, two might live almost as cheaply as one. Married to him, Letty could go on with her painting; by his word of honor he pledged himself to it.

But she had read somewhere that domestic life was crippling, nearly always, to a successful artistic career, a clog on the winged foot of genius. She had visions of herself in a noble high studio fronting canvases of great price. With this vision were interwoven other delectable pictures in which she invariably was the main and central figure—the pet of the Four Hundred, accepting commissions from distinguished and worshipful patrons; taking medals at the Academy; cooking chafing dish suppers in a vastly becoming smock for guests recruited from the aristocracy of Bohemia; queening it at artists' revels.

This conglomerate vision came swiftly between her and the present sight of Eddie's hurt, grieving face; his counter-arguments were lost in the rolling of great drums. She told him her chosen work must come first; to it she must sacrifice all else—or at least for the next few years she must. She owed it to herself; she owed it to her art. For art's sake she already had decided to alter the spelling of her name. As Letitia she had been christened, Letty she had been called, but Leatrice she would hereafter be, both to her friends and to the general public. It was a name she had found in a moving-picture magazine. Immediately she had been drawn to it; she felt that it fitted. And he, in his journalistic capacity, might, if agreeable to him, be the medium of advertising the change to the world at large. Leatrice—the very estate and sound of it seemed somehow to emphasize to him the depth and the width of the gulf opening between them. But he promised.

So Eddie, taking his bruised heart off his sleeve and putting it back in his breast to ache intolerably there, wrote for the top item of his weekly column one beginning: "All Whippoorwillville and vicinity are agog this week over the forthcoming departure of Miss Leatrice Ember, of here, rarely gifted daughter of the estimable late Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Ember, for the teeming metropolis of Greater New York City, where she will——" and so forth and so on, twenty-odd lines of it, concluding with the ringing summary: "Our loss is Gotham's gain!"

He meant it, too, his valedictory flourish. You see, touching on Letty's future, Eddie had no doubts. Here at least he was in confident accord with his fellow Whippoorwillvillians. This was what made the parting all the harder for him—this sincere conviction that he was giving her up forever. You cannot hitch your depot agent to a star, and down in his soul Eddie knew it and by such knowledge was desolated utterly. Sense of an eternal loss drooped his shoulders as he walked across the echoing boards of the platform and into his little rabbit hutch of a station on a given date after Number Seven, east-bound, due in at six twenty-two, due out at six twenty-four, had pulled away, plumping straight into the round red target of sunup.

Number Seven was carrying her off to join an innumerable caravan which journeys to besiege a heaven-piercing city of admirable desires. It is a caravan that is formed of youth. Its baggage train is loaded with hopes. The quick march of optimism briskens its processional step. Blithe old General Ego rides on ahead, in full command. But ultimately—of course, there has to be an ultimately, else many folks would never wake up from their day-dreaming at all—the long casualty lists of disillusionment and despair will claim most of the names on this army's muster-roll. Pardon me if here I seem to overstress the hyperbole; maybe I have been reading too many moving-picture sub-titles lately.

Even so, facts are facts, no matter what fine feathers of language you dress them up in. And it is a fact that New York is a place of immortal rewards and terrific mortality averages. But quoting percentage sheets never yet turned back a stripling's pilgrimage. You might just as well hang a

Keep off the Grass sign on an oasis and expect the famished travelers from across the burning sands to read it and heed it and head back for home.

Just then, floundering about for metaphor, I said Eddie Sackett's beloved went, that morning, to join a certain caravan. Rather, I should have called it a children's crusade, for that precisely is what it is—a children's crusade recruited from the deep ranks of inexperience. The girl who sang so much better than the rest of 'em in the village choir; the youngster who made a sweepstakes of it in the crossroads class of elocution; the born hewers of wood, the predestined drawers of water, who nevertheless yearn to hew the dumb marble into lines of sculptured life and draw deathless pictures for a reverent posterity; a whole generation of mute, inglorious Miltons, aspiring to be mute no longer nor yet inglorious; hallucinationists who diagnose as the pang of thwarted creation what really is the growing pains of their own mediocrity; auto-intoxicated adolescents mistaking the illusions of self-deception for a hankering after self-expression—by the dozen and the gross and the great gross they move on the city. Their going thither stands for dollars saved through patient sacrifice, for mortgages put on homesteads by flattered parents, for slender patrimonies to be spent, more often than not, on a vain quest.

You merely would be wasting your breath, though, did you, being wiser, try to warn the majority of them that inevitably and lamentably it must prove to be, for them, the very vainest of all possible quests. They are armoured against your warnings in confidence which, so many times, is only another name for conceit. Why should they listen to you? There, at her harbor's head, sits New York, the magic town. By virtue of a witchcraft resident in her, New York is going to provide them with those precious elements which, until now, through no inherent fault of theirs, they have been denied. It is New York that will make noble swans out of all the little awkward goslings, that will turn these drab sparrows of the hedgerow into birds of paradise, that is craving to graft the notes of the nightingale upon the feeble larynx of the sandpiper. New York with its opportunities, its advantages, its instinct for recognition; New York with its schools of applied design, its schools of interior decorating, its schools of the dramatic arts and the plastic and the graphic; its schools of expression, its schools of voice culture and of music; its schools for making finished moving-picture actors right out of the raw material—New York will somehow turn the trick. Good old appreciative, generous, discerning, observing, discovering New York!

So the stage-smitten amateurs who have neither grace nor personality but only a pale mimetic quality come hurrying to her embrace. And would-be writers of embroidered tales, who lack in imagination, in perception, in all sense for the right weight and the right color of words—they come along, too. And the boy whom a niggardly nature designed with intent that he should spend his maturer years making neat blue stripes on the red spokes of new farm wagons—he comes. The trouble with him is he thinks he has been called into this earth to paint rings around the Old Masters. And with him, mayhap, comes his sister. But her happy delusion is, that, concealed somewhere about her trivial person, are the sweeping forces of a queen of tragedy.

They have gone as far as they could go in their restricted environment. Circumscribed and secluded as they have been, they nevertheless have felt the urge. They have triumphed above cramping circumstance; they have outgrown the small towns; behold, they have broken the bars. Surely, with the ambition that is in them and the feel of latent power that stirs them, they must go high and far there in New York where the horizons are so broad; where atmosphere and association make for development; where the producing manager stalks for hidden talent in the highway and fame is hiding around every corner eager to pounce forth and tag any unknown juvenile phenomenon.

But the truth is that New York is an Iron Maiden that takes them in her arms only to crack their young bones and squeeze out their blood. The reputable schools, the honest teachers, weed them out, keeping those who give promise of making dependable craftsmen, banning the rest. Some, discouraged at the outset and homesick and daunted by the chill indifference of the town, return whence they came. They are, by odds, the luckier of those who are discarded. Others, as yet unhumbled and more persistent in their belief in themselves, fall into the maws of sharks who ply a shark's trade of imposture and fakery on the marshy verges of the arts; and it is the lot of these victims to be carried along by cajolery and deceit and false guidance until they have been stripped of their savings, then, eventually to be cast adrift.

Here and there is one who, by reason of having real merit, wins and wins magnificently. The name of such a one is advertised to all the land. But the losers are not advertised. And only God Almighty knows what an annual bumper crop there is of the losers—that same compassionate Almighty who hearkens to the heartbroken sobs of some poor child alone, except for Him, in a hall bedroom, three floors up and all the way back, with her head buried in the thin pillows to shut out the hateful face of failure. But if her Maker did not graciously deign to plant the seeds of genius in her when He put her forth into the world, how can even He now piece together the scraps of her paltry, shattered little dream? Sooner or later, every Whippoorwillville sends its Letty Ember to the City.

But our present concern is with our own particular Letty Ember from this particular Whippoorwillville. Promptly, to Eddie and to others as well, she wrote back letters that mainly were punctuated with exclamation points; about every fifth word was heavily underscored. New York was so wonderful—three black lines for emphasis under the "so" and a big "!" to finish with. Photographs and souvenir cards and printed descriptions did not begin to do it justice—it must be seen to be appreciated! One felt that in New York one could breathe, could expand, could grow! Surely one would never have time to get blue or faint-spirited here with so much to see and so much to do and such splendid goals to work toward!

True, there had been one small vexation at the outset. She had not been able to get into the Art Students' League, as she had counted on doing. It seemed the classes were all full at present; but to offset this though she had had a perfectly glorious piece of luck. She had been so fortunate as to be brought into contact with a Professor Beckermann, a very distinguished foreign painter, who took for his pupils only such beginners as had recognizable talent. He had condescended to look at those typical examples of her work which she had brought along to show what she could do. And he had been so enthusiastic over them, so sure of her ultimate greatness! Indeed, he had consented to take her on for a series of private lessons.

She was to call him "Master"; all his scholars called him "Master!"

Under him she would have individual attention, while at the Art League she merely would have been one of a group. He had explained to her the eminent advantages of this over the class system. It was bound to be a tremendous help to her; she would go forward so much faster than otherwise she could hope to go. And Professor Beckermann was so picturesque, so unconventional in dress and manner, so charmingly Bohemian! With him, surroundings seemed to count for nothing; he lived solely for his art. And he had technique at his very finger tips! And technique was all that she needed to land her at the very top of the profession. He had told her so himself. Wasn't she the lucky girl?

It must be confessed that living was very dear in New York. Everything cost ever so much more than the same thing would cost back home. And, of course, it was not to be expected that any one, let alone a little stranger from the country, should have the benefit of the Master's skill and knowledge without paying for it. But putting up with a few discomforts now only meant that supreme success would be coming all the sooner. Good-by and give her love to everybody. Already, Whippoorwillville seemed a million miles away. She was, in conclusion, Fondly, Leatrice.

Those first letters came in a white flock. It was as though she desired that at once and at first hand all her friends should know from her how promising the outlook was and how determined she was that they, who were so very proud of her, should never be disappointed in her. Later, there was a space—a very blank space for Eddie Sackett—when she did not write. To himself Eddie strove manfully to find excuses for her silence. She must be terribly busy; he could appreciate what heavy demands New York must be making upon her, socially and otherwise. Still, if only about once in so often—say, once every two weeks—she could steal the time to send him a line, that certainly would help him to bear the separation better. He kept on writing to her.

Finally a letter from her did come. It would appear that since he last heard from her there had been certain changes in her plans. For one thing, she had about decided, temporarily at least, to take up commercial designing—posters for advertisements and trade illustrations, etc., etc., etc.; she had been given to understand that these things paid very well. This, of course, did not mean that she had lost interest in her more serious work. That always would be her real forte. But she merely thought of adding on the other for the time being, as a sort of side-line. She did not mention Professor Beckermann in connection with this venture. In fact, she did not mention him at all this time; presumably he was to be taken for granted. Also she had another important piece of news: Eddie would be interested to hear that she no longer was staying in that stuffy, crowded old boarding house on West Fifty-seventh street. She had rented "bachelor girl quarters" farther downtown, so that she might have her workshop right there in her own snug, quiet little housekeeping apartment. She was now—just think of it—in the very heart of the city, only one block from Fifth Avenue! And Eddie, of course, knew what Fifth Avenue was—the street of the most fashionable shops and the most exclusive clubs, with many of the largest hotels and lots of the leading theaters within easy walking distance. She thought it would be rather nice if Eddie would be so good as to write one of his pieces, mentioning this fact, for the *Dentondale Sun-Independent*. Everybody in Whippoorwillville and probably a lot of other people in Denton County would be thrilled to hear where she had moved to. That is to say, he need not give the exact address which she now sent him; it would be sufficient if he stated that her present location was just one block from Fifth Avenue, with all its life and gaiety. (Signed) Affectionately, Leatrice.

Eddie did as requested. He was proud to do it and Whippoorwillville was proud to read the tidings. He sent on the printed clipping of what he wrote in his next letter, which went forward three days later, immediately after the current week's issue of the paper came out. In the letter he rather betrayed his private feelings. He admitted too deep regret that she seemed to be forgetting those at home who cared for her; at least, she certainly was neglecting them so far as the United States mails were concerned. He appreciated the difference in their relative positions these days—he plodding along in a poky little backwoods hole, she going ahead so rapidly in the artistic circles of Greater New York City. But with all that, he still only could *trust* and *pray* that she would not entirely cease to remember those *happy days gone by* which they had spent *together*. Eddie could do some underscoring himself when the occasion called for it.

A month later he got a scrap of a letter from her—no more than a dozen lines on one side of a half-sheet of note paper. Reading it, he judged that some little thing must have upset her. It ran like this:

> "Eddie Dear—I have not forgotten you. I'm not going to forget you. Nearly all the time these days I think of you and of those who really cared for me formerly and believed in me. Oh, Eddie, I couldn't ever go back home if I failed, could I? Oh, Eddie, it's awful hard sometimes to keep on being brave when you're all by yourself nearly always. I don't suppose there's any place where a person can get to be as lonely as they are in a big city. Letty."

Eddie decided she must have been very much upset indeed to forget that her name now was Leatrice. Well, the weather had been terribly hot all the week in Whippoorwillville. It must have been hot in New York, too. Maybe it was the weather that had got on her nerves.

He carried the letter about with him, reading it frequently and puzzling over it. It was the last letter he had from her. He was regularity itself, though—never let a week pass without writing.

One block from Fifth Avenue is Sixth. Now in New York, as has been stated by some one with almost an Old Testamental value of the strength of the repetitive, there are streets and streets. There are streets such as you may see in any one of half a dozen seaboard cities; and there are streets which in all main essentials might as well be the streets which parallel them. Parts of Eighteenth Street could be blended into Twenty-eighth or Thirty-eighth and nobody would mark the difference because there wouldn't be any difference to mark; the materials would match. Avenue A and Avenue B are twins. I know a stretch in Tenth Avenue which seems to have been copied, with a rare fidelity, from a stretch in Eleventh.

Then again there are streets such as you'll find nowhere else; streets which, having each one its own special individuality, are never by any chance to be confounded with any other streets there or elsewhere. They are the lines of character in the face of the city.

Take Wall Street; that's a deep wrinkle of avarice in Manhattan's lower jaw. Take Riverside Drive. On second thought, don't; it already has been taken by gas tanks, billboards, Grant's Tomb, the New York Central tracks and miles of the homeliest apartment houses on this footstool—a natural glory spoiled by squatter sovereignty. Take Broadway, which in the night-time is a broad yellow streak down the spine of the town, but which by day is seen to be dying of the same diseases that killed the Bowery—over-advertisement and not enough nourishment. Take the Bowery, smelling of stale memories, a stiff in a dirty winding sheet. Take Fifth Avenue if you can afford it. And take Sixth when you can afford nothing else. She's guaranteed not to be too rich for your blood.

Measured by feet, they lie within the span of a seventh of a mile, roughly. Yet by all other standards they are a thousand miles apart. Three minutes of brisk walking takes you from one to the other, but takes you also into a distant world; there's a Great Divide between them. Fifth Avenue always is avowedly herself. With clumpings here and there of big shops and hotels, bits of Sixth Avenue achieve a localized imitation of the rich sister—Cinderella trying on the silver slipper. But, mainly, Sixth Avenue keeps her own personality, too, and frankly is what Fifth might have been if Fifth hadn't had nearly all the luck in the family. Fifth is the front show window; Sixth is the alley fence at the back. Even their currents flow contrariwise. Fifth runs uptown into billions; Sixth pours downtown into poverty. One lives on yellowbacks; the other thrives on the pennies. Fifth comes springing out of Washington Square to sweep irresistibly northward; Sixth goes sliding south from the haggard and consumptive trees of Central Park to lose itself finally in some most dismal labyrinths of the Lower West Side. A dollar doesn't get you anywhere at all on Fifth; on Sixth a thin dime gives you a fair run for your money. One is whipped cream; the other mostly is what was left over when they got through with the skimming. Dives rides through Fifth; Lazarus shambles along Sixth, and scratches himself and panhandles as he goes. Multiply the similes for as long as pleases you; every time you'll get the same result.

A proper studio should have a north light. But the window in the room of this artist looked eastward. There was only the one window; the wall breadth could not have accommodated two and still leave a place for the head of the bed to go. Being an east window it looked toward Fifth Avenue, but of Fifth Avenue there was visible, from this point, only a fretted and formidable skyline that rose beyond a jumble of boxed-in courts, and odds and ends of lesser buildings, and queer-shaped slices of wasted space inclosed in high useless fences.

Also there was a tree. It was one of those trees which seem to grow exclusively in New York back yards. Such trees thrive on dampness and everlasting shade and the Monday drippings from somebody's clothesline. They are curious fronded trees which give off a sour smell when the sap rises in them in the spring and again when their leaves wither in the fall. I do not know the right name for them; let's call them back-yard trees. They are to be seen only when the wreckers tear away the houses in front, thereby exposing an inner walled town of rear tenements and unsightly sheds, which until then had been unrevealed and unsuspected; or when you live, say, as in this instance, on the third floor, back.

When the occupant of the room in point wearied of her own private view, which was often, and when she had the time to spare on her hands, which was generally, she might, by walking the length of a short hall to a window at the farther end of this hall command a different outlook. Here, spread beneath, was life and plenty of it. The elevated, like a thousand-legged earwig, spraddled by just below her, with its striped back narrowing in perspective and finally diminishing off this way and that to nothing at all. And when the trains went past, like lesser insects scooting along up and down the spinal column of this greater one, their weight and their speed made the long endless worm shake; and the grating of their wheels, for the moment, would drown out the sound of everything else.

The L structure chopped the vista short off at the downward angle. Even so, there was much to be observed by one stationed above. Within the compass of the block might be seen a taxidermist's shop, an undertaker's shop, a shop for the curing of raw furs, a misfit clothing parlor where garments which had died once elsewhere came to undergo a purgatorial delay under hot irons and benzine before their next reincarnation; a painless dentist's, a loan parlor, called by the vulgar, hock-shop; a bird and animal store advertising itself by its own aromas; a stationery store, a tobacconist, selling likewise daily papers and periodicals; a Yiddish lunchroom specializing in cold fried fish and strictly kosher hot frankfurters; a hat-cleaning establishment; a basement dweller who dealt in ice, coal and kindling wood; a Greek employment agency, a club for

Swiss waiters, head, side, and omnibus; two orangeade stands, an Italian greengrocer's, a hardware store, a second-hand furniture store, a museum of human anatomy—Boys under Sixteen Positively Not Admitted; a corner where a saloon has been, now For Rent, With or Without Fixtures; a boot-blacking stand, a jobbing house in artificial flowers, a trunk store which always was on the point of going immediately out of business and therefore offered sacrificial bargains in suitcases and grips.

Not all these were on her side of the street nor yet all on the ground levels. They began in the cellars and they mounted above one another, flight by flight, to the attics; but all of them and more besides in that same briefened stretch, from crossing to crossing, might be ticked off on the fingers by one who had leisure for such employment, as this one had; and sundry establishments among them might also be smelled, especially where two or three firms hived together as joint lessees of a single floor, pooling, as it were, the essential perfumes of their respective businesses.

Lesser merchandisers, of the itinerant cast, throve on the sidewalk trade, preempting space for themselves in doorways and along curbstones and even out on the perilous roadway beyond the pavement line, and holding their ground against a clamorous and occasionally a threatening opposition. One day, warranted all-silk neckties seemed to have the favor of these ardent competitors; about every other one of them would be offering silk neckties at one for thirty-five, three for a dollar. Another day it would be bath sponges that they pushed, or patent pants hangers at ridiculously low prices, or roach poison in handy packages. But the pretzel venders never sought to tempt the popular fancy with new wrinkles. Their stocks, coiled like varnished brown snakes on upright spindles, stuck around the edges of baskets or pushcarts, were staples, dependable and in constant demand. This likewise was true of the dealers in dill pickles; they likewise knowing their public and having their regular clientèles.

Always, in the daytime, the avenue crawled with motion and went clanging the cymbals of industry. It was most active, though, and rivalry for customers reached the highest peaks at noontime when the loft workers came downstairs for lunch and air and conversation; surface vehicles scarcely could get through the wedged pack then. There were two Jewish men of this persuasion who daily stationed themselves in an areaway almost directly under the window where our lodger watched, coming together for the resumption of an argument which, it seemed, would never be ended. In time she came to know both of them and to be on the outlook for them. In a dulled sort of way they fascinated her; their inevitable appearance made an interlude in the deadened monotony of her own midday. One of them, a small shabby man, talked with his mouth, his shoulders, his legs, his arms, his collarless neck and his hands—notably with his hands. His hands were forever in motion. Frequently, in the fever of debate, his fingers clutched the air as though he would seize argument out of the ether. His antagonist, a second generation American and dressed accordingly, rarely spoke and never gesticulated. He expressed all varying emotions—contempt, doubt, acquiescence, denial, conviction, wavering—by three mediums, to wit, his eyebrows, his under lip and the cigar that teetered between his teeth. His silence, somehow, was infinitely more potent than all the outcry of the posturing adversary. He probably had the most skeptical pair of eyebrows in the world, and the most eloquent lower lip. Certainly a more facile or a more oratorical cigar than his has never been rolled.

Your true creator of pictures could find material here to keep him busy squeezing tubes for a year. For this place, with its grindings and shriekings and its overhead quiverings, with its swarmings underfoot, its countless eager concerned faces, its jamming together of nervous bodies, its swirls and masses, its stinks, even, was a profile and a perfect cross-section of life that fairly dripped with the city's essence. Its component parts fell naturally into panoramic groups, and its local color was every color of humanity there is. But, as was said some pages back, this one had not within her what a bonafide artist must have. To her it was a brazen desolation of ugliness and heartlessness and harsh sounds, peopled with alien breeds of men and women following noisily after alien gods—the strange gods that were so disregardful of the lonely and the forsaken.

Down yonder in Whippoorwillville Eddie Sackett got so he just naturally couldn't stand it any longer. Faithfulness cannot feed forever on itself; it needs more material provender, lest it starve to death outright.

Anyway, from the standpoint of the economics, he was in position to take a trip. Out of its annual earnings and the fulness of its heart the railroad had at length its way clear to granting that raise in salary. Eddie put on his new mail-order fall suit and caught Number Seven, eastbound. It had been nearly four months now since that last puzzling short letter came to him, nearly eight months since he had seen its writer.

A common carrier deposited him at Grand Central in the latter end of an October forenoon. From the moment of his arrival, almost, New York began jolting him financially. He knew what hotel he meant to stop at; it was one that advertised in the *Dentondale Weekly Sun-Independent*, mentioning moderate rates for single rooms with bath. The directions concerning street cars, which a policeman at a door of the station gave him, seemed distressingly intricate. To be on the safe side he took a taxicab. And the taxicab literally ate up money. Nearly every time he looked at the meter it had jumped another ten cents. Eddie Sackett wasn't stingy, but in Whippoorwillville a dime was nevertheless a dime and you expected some proper return for it.

Then there was the hotel when he arrived there, a confusing, a mastodonic, and despite its printed promises, an expensive establishment. A clerk gave him a room at a rate per day which the clerk evidently regarded as a very reasonable rate. It was dinner time now—dinner time comes in the middle of the day at Whippoorwillville—and Eddie Sackett, for all his devotion, was none of your puling and pining lovers; Eddie was hungry. He asked the location of the dining-room and was directed to a place called the grill. But the tariffs, as set forth on the menu, were calculated to bitt his appetite. Moreover, there was a waiter of an aggressive aspect who exhaled in evident and audible impatience as Eddie ran a forefinger down the price list, and this fussed the new guest. In his flustered state his eye finally fell, halfway down the card, on a fish dish—fish *a la something*, with sauce *something else*—which alone, of all the items named, seemed reasonably priced.

He told the waiter he would take a piece of that, with coffee and bread and butter and fried potatoes. It was quite a long time before these things were brought and after they had been brought and he had eaten, a genuine shock awaited him. The total cost of the meal, as scribbled on the check, was the cause of this shock. To begin with, there were separate entries for the bread and the butter and for the cup of coffee and the potatoes. They threw those things in free with every meat order at the Elite Restaurant back home; but it appeared that in New York they were charged for—and when he questioned the amount entered on account of the principal dish, the waiter, producing the menu, which in accordance with the metropolitan custom, he previously had taken away with him, directed Eddie's attention to the figures plainly printed there. Eddie saw his error then; all things considered, though, the mistake had been, on his part, a perfectly natural one. The "20" hadn't meant twenty cents at all; it had meant twenty minutes.

In spite of the prospects of mounting outlays it became necessary for him to take another taxicab in order speedily to reach his next destination. After listening to certain involved and bewildering statements by the uniformed official who warded the hotel entrance, he had a conviction that, going afoot, the trip would eat up hours of his time. And he was in a hurry to get where he was going. At least, so he was at the moment of starting.

But as the taxi took him on his way, criss-crossing in and out of streets which roared to the traffic in them, a grave doubt as to the wisdom and the advisability of his adventure began to assail Eddie. Considering it, he almost forgot to view the shifting sights or watch for the spasmodic bounding of the meter. That same doubt had been living in the back part of his mind since before he started for New York; his advent into the city and a sudden daunting realization of the size of the city had quickened it into this present activity. He had not written to his sweetheart of his intent. He had jubilantly designed to take her by surprise. Just what was to follow on the heels of the surprise—what he would say and do, what he would propose, what he would suggest, he did not exactly know. At no time of his exciting thirty-hour journey had he known exactly. He had been content to let the immediate future take care of its own contingencies; and now here he was in New York, bound for her studio and due there shortly, and still with no definite plan of campaign—practically with no valid excuse for having come at all. Question marks began to pass before him in a succession of heavy curlycues. What right had he, without invitation or encouragement, to bring his puny desires, his hopeless longings, his unimportant countrified self to her here in this place of her great endeavours and her greater aspirations? She would be busied in noble undertakings; engrossed inevitably in congenial and suitable companionships; and he—well, he was just plain inconsequential Eddie Sackett, forlorn and desperate from lovesickness. He was a fool and it was a fool's errand that had brought him and, for him, humiliation and regret must lie at the impending end of the journey. Maybe it would be better, all round, if he turned back——

The jolt of stopping jarred him to realities. The taxi had halted almost directly under some sort of trestled railway. As he stepped out, Eddie comprehended the surroundings. Dubiousness arising from a fresh cause—from a condition now and not from theories—assailed him. Was it possible that this neighbourhood actually bordered on Fifth Avenue? It was possible, surely!

"Are you certain this—this is the right place?" he asked, making exact change to cover the amount of the fare as recorded. "Looks to me like we must have made a mistake."

"Same address wot you gimme," stated the driver. He flirted his thumb. "Dis is Sixth Avenoo and dere's your number." He derisively flipped the coins Eddie put in his hand; the absence of a tip annoyed him. He set his car in motion and went briskly away.

Right enough, the proper number was set above the door directly in front of him; but the door opened into a small cluttered cigar store. Within, behind a showcase, with his back half turned to Eddie, was a dark, foreign-looking man. He swung a broad and sullen face about as Eddie hesitated on the threshold.

"Vell?" he inquired. His voice seemed to come rumbling from his lower abdomen.

"I'm looking for Miss Leatrice Ember," said Eddie, "in care of a Miss Harriet Devore."

"Mush Devo'?" With the least possible waste of physical energy the man motioned to the left. "Dwo vlights upt!"

"Which?—did you say two flights up?"

"Pshure!—don' you onderstan' Unglish? Oudside und upt der shteps. Ring der doorbell on der landink ven you get dere."

So Eddie, more mystified than ever, went outside and up the steps indicated—remarkably dirty steps they were—mounting a well of semi-darkness until he came to the second of a pair of long narrow halls and to a door which faced him at the turn of the staircase. Set in the jamb of the doorway was a push-button. There was a card tacked to the woodwork alongside the button, but in that light he could not read what was written or printed on it. Something was wrong; this couldn't possibly be the place. He might be pretty ignorant of New York, but some things he knew intuitively. Still, since he had come this far he might as well go farther. On a venture he rang the bell.

Response was immediate. The door opened part way. A woman's shape showed rather dimly in the opening—Eddie was vaguely aware of the details of much and very bright hair and a vivid kimono—and a woman's voice challenged him with:

"Well, what?"

"I'm looking for a Miss Harriet Devore's house," stated Eddie; "but I guess maybe——"

"Quit guessin' then, you got your wish."

"Could I see her a minute?"

"You're seein' her now." She seemed unnecessarily short. "And part of your minute is gone already. Make it snappy, Waldo!"

"Was there—is there a young lady named Ember——"

"They was—and they is." She had such a disconcerting way of interrupting.

"Well, I just happened to be here in New York," said Eddie, his diffidence increasing, "and I just thought I'd drop in——"

The suddenness with which she moved caused him to break off his speech of explanation. With a jerk she had opened the door wider so that a better light from within, where the gas was turned on even though it still was mid-afternoon, shone past her on him. Her voice had sharpened too:

"Say, are you by any chance from down yonder, wherever it is, that she come from?" Seeing him now more distinctly, she answered herself: "Yes, you must be! And, say, are you a friend of hers?"

"Yes, I am."

"Good friend—know what I mean?—old-time friend from the old home town and everything?"

"Yes, of course."

"And still they's some'll say this religion stuff is the bunk!" This speech was not a question; it was an exclamation, rather.

"Which, ma'am? I don't know as I get you. You see, I've known her pretty much all my life and I——"

"You have? Then come on in here with me a minute."

She backed away and he followed her into what plainly was a room where the domestic side of living was consolidated with its social side, and she revealed to him a head of golden hair that was too good to be true—even Eddie could tell that—and a curiously pouched and mottled middle-age face. With a puffy hand she closed the folds of her red robe at her throat and spoke rapidly:

"Say, listen: It's almost like as if you'd been sent—comin' to-day of all the days in the whole year. Here all day long, ever since this mornin', I've been wonderin' what they was for me to do. And then in you walk! And you ast me does she live here! And say you're a friend of hers!"

"Is she sick? Has something happened?"

"Something has mighty near happened. Say, listen: How long is it since you seen this kid?"

"Not since the eighteenth day of last February, when she first started East," replied Eddie.

"And how long has it been since you heard from her—letter or message or something?"

"June twenty-third was the last letter I got."

Seemingly without reason and all in one moment, the woman turned violent:

"Say, what the hell was you and all the rest of the people in that hick town thinkin' about anyway, leavin' her all alone here all this time? Wasn't they nobody nowheres that'd have the interest in her to find out about her?"

Eddie stiffened. In that same instant, too, he had found himself.

"She had me," he said stoutly. "She's got me now. Only, if anything serious has been the matter I didn't know a word about it."

"You're goin' to know about it in a minute. It'd be better for me to tell it to you first—much as I know—and then maybe that'll sort of save her feelin's. Listen: She's been sick, all right, but it ain't nothin' that a doctor could cure her of. It's a different sort of medicine she's needin'."

"Where is she? Let me——"

"Just a minute. Lemme give you the dope first. I reckon it's news to you, ain't it, to hear that she's been strictly up against it? Well, she has, like many another like her is, in this man's town. She come here—let's see, it was back yonder along about the end of May it must 'a' been—and taken my small back room on this here same floor. I lease these here two top floors and rent them furnished, by the week, get me? I ain't payin' her any mind except to collect from her every Sat'day night. These here lodgers don't mean anything to me; they come and go. I got my own worries, me doin' the best I can and just about gettin' by, what with some of these skates runnin' out on me every little while and bilkin' me out of my rent money and all. So all I notice about her is that she's quiet and ladylike and minds her own business, whatever it is. But here lately it seemed like she's been stickin' in her own room mighty close—well, that's all right, too. But this mornin' early I smelled gas 'scapin'—we burn gas here—and I traces it to her room and they she is, layin' in bed with the gas turned on full."

He seized her by her arms and shook her. He was altogether a new Eddie Sackett—masterful, white, tense, on edge to defend and to succor his womankind.

"She's all right? It was an accident? She's still here?"

"She's all right, so far as that goes. And she's still here. But it wasn't no accident, Mister—Mister——"

"Sackett—Sackett's the name, damn it!"

"Not no accident, Mister Sackett. She was fixin' to do a Dutch—get me? She wasn't far gone, though—the gas hadn't had a good chance yet to get her. A little fresh air and me workin' over her a spell and she comes right out of it. And then, bein' weak and all, she just breaks down and spills the whole works to me. Seems like she come up here from that comic town of yours with the trick name, aimin' to set New York on fire paintin' pictures. And right away she falls for some sort of a greasy fakir that promises to set her in right, and he skins her out of the biggest part of her jack—her money, I should say. And then he turns cold on her and gives her the air. And she comes down here and hires a room off of me, figurin' maybe she can live cheap and get by for awhile doin' picture jobs for business houses or something. But the stuff she turns out is the limit and nobody don't want it—the poor kid! And what little money she's got left begins to run low on her. And she begins to get wise that she's been playin' a big game of pretend and it ain't got her nowheres—and never will, neither.

"With a girl like her in that fix, here in New York, they ain't but one of three ways out—she can go on the streets, or she can go back, licked, to the place where she come from, or she can bump herself off. And this kid was too decent to turn hustler—excuse me if I speak plain language, but that's the facts of it. And she was too proud to go back home and own up to everybody that knows her how she'd flopped. She just couldn't bear the thought of that, she told me; seemed like anything else was better than that. She can't bear the thought of 'em knowin' it, even now. So, what with her bein' so lonesome and down-and-out, and livin' for months on bum food and not any too much of that, and never gettin' nowheres, she just decided to turn on the gas. She tells me she'd heard that gas is one of the easiest ways of croakin' they is.

"What I guess I should 'a' done, findin' her that way, was call a cop and get an ambulance sent for and have her taken off to the hospital or the station house or somewheres. But I didn't have the heart to do it. So, instead of attendin' to my own business, I been settin' here wonderin' where she was goin' to head in and what I was goin' to do about her myself—and then this here bell rings and in you walks—the first, last and only person that ever come astin' for her all the time she's been here. I'll say it again—it's like as if you'd been sent as an answer!" Suddenly a note of doubtfulness came into Miss Devore's voice. "But say, listen: Think you can get her to go back home, Mister Sackett? She's still dead set that her home folks ain't never to know the truth about how she failed—says she'll die first, before she'll tell 'em. If she goes, you'll have to cover up for her, some way."

"Think I can get her to go? Huh, I'm going to take her! She's good enough for that town or any town. She's too good for this damn town!"

"Boy, listen: You and me live more'n a thousand miles apart, I guess, and our ways of thinkin' may be even further apart than that. But when you talk like that I got to hand it to you for bein' an all-right guy. But—but what'll she do when she gets home—without money and no way to earn her own livin' and not no kinsfolks to fall back on neither, from what she tells me. That's something for you and her both to think about."

"What does she need with money?" The manner of the protector and the provider competently was his. "I've got the money. I reckon I can make a living for two. My wife won't have to work."

"Your wife?"

"Certainly! We're going to be married—married right here in your house, if you'll let us."

"If I'll let you? Say, listen, man, I'll give the bride away."

"Then let's go tell her!"

"Tell her what?"

"Tell her she's going to be married, soon as the minister and the license can get here."

"Say, for a guy from a rube town you're swift, ain't you? When I first saw you five minutes ago I didn't think it was in you, honest I didn't. How long have you two been engaged anyhow? She never mentioned bein' engaged when she was spillin' her troubles out to me this mornin'."

"A long time," said Eddie; "only she didn't know it. But I knew it all along. And say, Miss Devore, there's a reason why I'm specially glad you're going to let us get married here."

He half shut his eyes, the journalist, shaping in his mind the introductory sentence of the telegram he would send that night for publication in the ensuing issue of the *Dentondale Weekly Sun-Independent*: "Wedded: At the studio apartment of the bride, in Greater New York City, one block from Fifth Avenue, Whippoorwillville's most gifted daughter, and more lately one of Gotham's rising and successful young artists, Miss Leatrice Ember, to ye proud and happy scribe——"

He snapped back to roseate earth again.

"Well, what are we waiting for, Miss Devore? Let's go tell her."

The woman led the way for him out into the hall and down the hall to its darker and deeper end and there swung open a door for him to enter by. As the girl on the cot bed sat up and cried her joy at sight of him who crossed the threshold to take her in his arms, Miss Devore, turning her head, uttered, aside and to herself, what was at once a defiance, a boast, a triumphant pronouncement and, yes—by the blowsy Miss Devore's curious standards—a prayer:

"And still they's some'll say they ain't no God!"

God and His Profundity.—One can be not lacking in wit and find in God the accomplice and friend who is always wanting. God is the eternal confidant in that tragedy where every one is the hero. There are, perhaps, usurers and assassins who say to God: "Lord, let my next operation succeed!" But the prayer of these rascally folk does not disturb the honour and pleasure of mine. Baudelaire.

An Adventure of Captain Ivan Koravitch

Late of the Imperial Russian Army

How the Captain Was Entertained by a Chinese Mandarin

By VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH

CAPTAIN IVAN KORAVITCH smoked his little brown Russian cigarette reflectively. But his eyes were alert and shining, and every now and again he twisted his moustache, and a little smile hovered over his face. He finished his cigarette, helped himself to another from the box on the table in front of him, and began to talk. Mention had been made of the strong footing which Russia had succeeded in effecting in Manchuria before she went to war with Japan, and those present expected the Captain to have something to say on the subject.

"Ah, my friends, I am only a soldier. I cannot talk much about politics; it is not my business. Yes? But I think we were very clever. It was owing to the financial policy of M. de Witte that Russia, as a guarantor, enabled China to borrow money at 4 instead of 5 per cent. That led to the establishment of the Russo-Chinese Bank; and when one bases one's policy on good finance, success in other matters often arrives. For hence it was that Russia obtained the concession of the East Chinese Railway, which enabled her to continue her Trans-Siberian Railway southward through Manchuria. Oh yes, we wanted an outlet—what do you call it? We wished for expansion. Well, you also have wished for expansion, and have obtained it—all over the world. Yes?

"Of course, it meant that many soldiers went to Manchuria. One cannot obtain expansion without soldiers. Other people—like the Chinese—who do not wish themselves to be expanded by foreigners—must be made to agree by soldiers. Yes, and it was very funnee. We did not always call them soldiers. We called them railway guards. It was, for example, necessary when we promised to evacuate Manchuria to increase there our railway guards. So their numbers were fixed at thirty thousand men, and they were recruited from the regular troops. It only meant putting green shoulder-straps and collar-patches on to a man's tunic, and there you had a 'railway guard' instead of a 'soldier.' Splendid!

"For a time I was attached to these railway guards. The line connecting Port Arthur with Harbin possessed depots for them about every fifteen miles, some of them very large. At Liao-yang, for example, we had barracks to hold three thousand men. At Mukden we even used the bricks of the wall of the Chinese Temple of Earth to help construct barracks for twice that number. That is the way we evacuated Manchuria in 1902. Splendid!

"I was stationed the next year in a leetle town on the Harbin railway called Feng-Chung. It was not one of our big barracks. I only had about a hundred guards in my command, and there was not very much to do. There was also not very much with which to make amusements in one's spare time. My subaltern, a youth named Basil Maximovitch, sometimes rode with me on horseback, or we played at cards. There were two engineers attached to the railway, but they were not very companionable.

"There was, however, in Feng-Chung an English missionary station with a young priest of your Church, who was also a doctor—splendid!—named Linthorpe. Mr. Linthorpe had brought his sister with him, and the two of them lived quite alone, which I came to discover was very brave but not very wise. I will tell you.

"There were at that time not only the Chinese inhabitants living in Manchuria, for the most part quiet and peaceable, but also companies of disbanded Chinese soldiers, who had previously fought against us. Ah yes, many of them were rather bandits than soldiers; robbers, who would sometimes give much trouble. Some of them roamed the country in small groups, and would suddenly swoop down on a town or village to plunder. So it was not always safe to go unarmed.

"It was one day that I was walking down a narrow street in Feng-Chung that I heard much noise and shouting. A couple of dozen or so of these wandering Chinese had come into the town, and had met the sister of the missionary, Miss Nora Linthorpe. It did not look pleasant for her when I arrived. She was standing with her back to a wall, very pale, and they had surrounded her. Some of them had even drawn their long knives. Pouf! It was nothing! They were all cowards, and I had my sword and revolver. It did not take me a few minutes to effect a rescue; and I think one or two of them had to bind up some flesh wounds. I, of course, escorted her to her brother's house. She, poor young lady, was glad to have me walk with her, for she had received much fright. And it was thus I came to know the Rev. Frederick Linthorpe—the first priest of your Church I had ever met.

"From that time I often went to see Mr. Linthorpe and his sister. You must understand that she was a very pretty girl, and I was young and not bad looking. Also, because she thought I had saved her life—it was, as I said, nothing,—I think she admired me very much."

And Captain Ivan Koravitch twisted his moustache and preened himself. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"One cannot say what might have happened, but I—I was a soldier, and I had no thoughts of marrying. Also, Nora Linthorpe had a fiancé in England, and I suppose she thought it was her duty to remember him, though—if I had chosen—bah! I did not make love to her—but I have thought she loved me a leetle. Yes?

"But that is not the story. I told Mr. Linthorpe it was very dangerous for his sister to go about alone, or even to reside in Feng-Chung, and that he should send her back to England; but although he agreed she must be careful, he said—and she also—that she had her work to do with him, and duty must come first. Splendid!

"Oh yes, splendid! But I was very sorry for them, my friends. I, too, was a man accustomed to duty, but I knew it is not always easy to go on doing one's duty if there is no success. Mr. Linthorpe and his sister had lived in Feng-Chung for a year and a half to evangelise the Chinese. But with what success? Certainly they had a leetle school for some children, and people would go to them who were sick; but all the time they had only obtained one convert to their religion, a Chinese named Chang-Yung, who was a servant in the establishment of a Mandarin, Li Ting-Fang, who lived in a big house just outside the town. Chang-Yung was grateful because Mr. Linthorpe and his sister had been kind to his father when the latter was dying of a slow and painful sickness. And the Chinaman, as you know, has much filial love for his father. Therefore, I suppose, partly to repay the kindness, he had consented to be baptised. The only convert! And yet they went on with their work, and did not complain. Me? I could not understand, but I admired—what is it you call it?—yes!—their pluck.

"Mr. Linthorpe—I thought sometimes he should have been a soldier and not a priest. He was a very fine young man. He could shoot, and box with his fists—yes—and play cards, though he would never play for money, which I could not understand. We became great friends, and from him I learned much about your country before I came to reside here after many years.

"Of course I made inquiries about the men who had attacked Miss Linthorpe; and I heard a very curious thing. It was my sergeant told me.

"'These men,' he said, 'they have not gone away, my Captain!'

"'No? Where are they?'

"'They are in the house of Li Ting-Fang!'

"'Oh!' I replied, 'but that is not possible. Li Ting-Fang is peaceable. He has done much to help us. He could not be in league with robbers and bandits. He is the chief magistrate of the district.'

"The sergeant shrugged his shoulders.

"'Nevertheless,' he said, 'it is true what I say.'

"I wondered much, and I did not believe him. But, to satisfy my mind, I determined to pay a visit to this Li Ting-Fang. Ah, yes; I did not know the Chinese so very well then! No one of our Western countries can ever get to know them as their curious minds work.

"Of course it had to be a formal visit. I understood a leetle of the strict etiquette of the Chinese, and I had myself carried to the Mandarin's house in a chair with attendants, and sent in my visiting-card—a big red one, with my name in Chinese. I was shown into a big room, richly furnished, and presently Li Ting-Fang entered. He was a fat old man, with a thin grey moustache, and leetle beard just under his lower lip. He bowed gravely to me, and I returned his salutation. Then he motioned me to sit down.

"I knew it would not do to come to my business at once. One had to observe great formalities. He spoke a leetle French at first, but when he found I knew English, we talked in that language; and he spoke it much better than I.

"After he had welcomed me to what he called his insignificant hovel, and I had replied that I was overwhelmed with its grandeur, he asked me, though he must have known—

"'From what heaven-ruled and prosperous country do you come?'

"'I am a visitor to this sublime land from the impoverished and almost unknown country called Russia!'

"Oh, yes! I knew how to answer him.

"'What is your honourable age?'

"'My few and miserable years are twenty-three in number. May I inquire of the length of Your Excellency's illustrious days?'

"'I have attained unto sixty-five wasted years. How is the health of your venerable father? I trust he is yet alive?'

"'He still encumbers my mean country. With the permission of heaven, his insignificant health is good.'

"'What is the number of your high-born brothers?'

"'Alas!' I replied, 'heaven has punished the misdeeds of my ancestors by granting but one totally unworthy son to my father—your undistinguished servant.'

"A queer leetle gleam came into his eyes when I told him this, and a smile broke out over his face. Presently we came to the business of my call. He listened without a word or a gesture while I related to him the attack on Miss Linthorpe. Afterwards I told him plainly that I had been informed that he was sheltering the marauders. Then he put out his hands, palms upwards, and said—

"'The matter of the assault upon the English lady shall be inquired into. I am here to administer justice, and such crimes are not permissible. But as regards what you tell me, your information is not correct. Is it likely that I should shelter within my mean establishment those whom it is my office to punish for such misdeeds? The thing is an insult to my revered ancestors!'

"He spoke with much dignity, rose to his feet, and bowed. I knew that the audience was over, and that it was useless to talk more; so I left him. I was a leetle angry with myself that I had listened to my sergeant at all.

"The next day I visited Mr. Linthorpe, and told him what I had done. But he, too, could not believe that Li Ting-Fang had given a refuge to the bandits.

"'I also,' he said, 'have been to see him about the attack on my sister. He expressed much concern about it, but feared by this time the men had made their escape to the hills. He is a most interesting and well-disposed man. I quite enjoyed drinking a cup of tea with him.'

"'He did not offer me tea,' I said.

"'What? Not give you tea? That was strange.'

"'Why?' I asked.

"'It is part of the etiquette of a host in an official visit. And Li Ting-Fang does not usually make a mistake. It was almost equivalent to a studied insult.'

"I did not think very much about it at the time. It passed out of my mind. But afterwards I had reason to remember it. Yes.

"'Wait a minute,' went on Linthorpe; 'Chang-Yung is in my house. Let us have him in, and I will ask him a question.'

"Chang-Yung came into the room, and stood quite still with his arms folded and his hands tucked in the opposite sleeves of his loose coat. Also he bent his head.

"'Chang-Yung,' said the missionary, 'velly bad piecee men makee plenty bobbery all a same Missee Linthorpe. You savvy?'

"'Me savvy!' replied the Chinaman.

"'Bad piecee men run away. Where to they go?'

"'Me no savvy.'

"'Li Ting-Fang, him know where piecee men go?'

"'No can do.'

"'All lightee.'

"'He knows nothing evidently,' said Linthorpe when he had gone. 'I believe he would tell me if he did. Your sergeant has got hold of the wrong end of the walking-stick.'

"Ah, my friends, I learned many of your English idioms from this missionary: the wrong end of the walking-stick! Splendid!

"A few days afterwards I had other matters in my mind. Farther up the line, towards Harbin, there was trouble. Quite a big force of these wandering bandits had attacked a station and killed some of our men. I was ordered, by telegram, to send the whole of my company, in command of my subaltern, as a reinforcement. I kept back only two, who were sick, and in an hour's time a train had taken away the remainder. So I was left alone at the station, except the two engineers, and they were drinking. I thought I would go and play a game of cards without money with my friend the missionary. Also I knew it would please Nora Linthorpe to see me. Splendid!

"It was dusk when I set out. I had not very far to go—only along two streets—but I carried my sword and my revolver, as was my custom. Ah, but they were of leetle use in the face of what happened. Again I had not learned very much about the Chinese and their habits, for suddenly I was taken by a great surprise. An arm was thrown around my neck from behind, and I received a kick in the smallness of my back that threw me to the ground. Before I could recover myself I was helpless. My hands were bound tightly behind my back, and a sack or something was thrown over my head. And all the time I did not hear a sound, although I *felt* there was quite a leetle crowd of men around me. Then I was made to walk forward. They held me up by the arms and pushed me along. Once I cried out very loud beneath the sack, but I felt a sharp point at once against my breast, and a voice said in pigeon English—

"'Suppose makee bobbery, then killee chop-chop.'

"I had no wish to be killed chop-chop at all, so I went quietly. But I tell you, I was not feeling at all happy. We walked for some distance, and then I felt I was entering within doors. Presently the sack was removed from my head, and when I had blinked a leetle in the light of a lamp, I was astonished to find that I was in the same room where Li Ting-Fang had received me a week or two before; and somehow I felt less happy still.

"Standing around me were half a dozen villainous-looking men. One of them, who had a bandage round his head, I recognized as a fellow I had wounded with my sword when I had made the rescue of Nora Linthorpe. And he scowled at me with a very nasty grin. They had, of course, taken away my revolver and sword.

"I was beginning to see that my sergeant had been right after all, when Li Ting-Fang himself entered the room. He stood for a few moments just inside the door with a leetle smile on his face, bowed to me, and said, very politely, in his smooth silky voice—

"'Once again, Captain Koravitch, I welcome you to my insignificant dwelling.'

"But I was in no mood for politeness, and I said—

"'What is the meaning of this? Why have I been brought here like this?'

"Again he smiled—a very nasty smile—and replied in his excellent English—

"'Your curiosity shall be speedily satisfied.'

"Then he made a sign to the others, and said a few words in Chinese. Immediately they forced me down into a low chair, and tied me to it with cords. Then they left the room.

"What is it that you call it when one is in great difficulty—yes? So! A tight fix! Splendid! As Li Ting-Fang seated himself, still smiling at me, I felt I was in a very tight fix. And I was right.

"'I have much to say to you, Captain Koravitch,' he began, 'and I have no hesitation in saying it because I know that you will never have the chance of repeating it. I will be quite candid with you, and speak in the plain language of your damnable civilization.'

"He certainly did not put me at my ease. But I shut my mouth very firm, and looked him straight in the face. He should not see how I was feeling.

"'Like your father, of whom you spoke the other day,' he went on, still in his calm soft voice, and without any movement of his hands or body, 'I had an only son, but'—and a slight sneer curled his nostrils—'in our older Eastern civilization a son is of more importance than in the barbarous Western nations. We are taught that it is not only a son's duty to revere and assist his father while the latter is living upon the earth, but also to revere and preserve his ancestral shrine when he has departed. With us a man can die happy in the knowledge that he leaves a son who will still continue to fulfil his filial duties. But when I depart from this earth I shall leave no son behind me!'

"There was just the touch of sadness in his eyes that made me exclaim, 'I am sorry.'

"'You say that you are sorry? Listen. It is owing to your own damnable nation that I have no son. He was slain by General Gribsky at the massacre near Blagovestchenak. He was not a soldier, Captain Koravitch'—and he looked at me with the disdain that was in his voice, for the educated Chinese despise those of the military caste,—'he was a peaceable citizen.

Only by the decree of heaven did he chance to be in the locality. But they killed him.'

"'You must remember,' I said, 'that the Chinese themselves had opened fire upon Blagovestchenak. A punishment was due.'

"'But not to my son. I have told you he was not a soldier. I have now no one who will worship at my ancestral tablet, and those of my ancestors. The only consolation left to me is revenge. And for that I have waited patiently.'

"'Li Ting-Fang,' I replied in as steady a voice as I could master, 'I cannot see that your revenge concerns me. I was not at Blagovestchenak. I did not kill your son.'

"He bowed to me, and went on—

"'I will explain. As I said before, you will never repeat what I tell you. I swore revenge upon your nation. It is I, by means of my money and my influence, who have organized many of the attacks upon your outposts. I have already taken many lives in return. But that is not enough. I swore that I would, in exchange for my son's life, be satisfied with nothing less than the life of a Russian of high standing, who was the only son of his father. And when you told me unconsciously that you fulfilled the condition, you uttered your own doom.'

"There was silence for a full minute. I would not speak. But my heart sank within me. My friends, I was *very* much afraid.

"He spoke again, this cold, smiling Chinaman.

"'Your men are all absent. There is no one but my servants who knows you are here, and they will not speak. To escape is impossible. To-morrow I shall *begin* my revenge. To-morrow you will *begin* to die. I have waited long. And you will also wait long before the end comes.'

"Then it was I realized to the full the horror of my position. For I had heard of the tortures of the Chinese. I turned my face to him as well as I could, and cried—

"'You devil!'

"Then he walked towards me very slowly, and spat in my face. My God! if my hands had but been free!

"He struck a gong, and three men came in. They released me from the chair, while Li Ting-Fang said, 'You will have plenty of time to-night to meditate upon what awaits you to-morrow.' Then they took me out of the room, with my hands still bound behind me, and led me along a passage and down some steps. It was just as we turned to go down these steps that I caught a glimpse of Chang-Yung coming along the passage. But he appeared to take no notice of what was going on. At the bottom of the steps was a door, through which they thrust me into a small dark room. Then I heard the door shut and the key turned in the lock. I was alone.

"I tell you, my friends, I have been in many dangers, but I never felt so much afraid as then. I knew that no one would ever suspect this grave Chinese Mandarin, and I could not think of any chance of a rescue. When the darkness became a leetle familiar I could see a small slit of light about a foot high and a few inches wide. This was the only window. It was fairly high up in the wall, but by standing up on my toe-tips I could just see through. There was no glass, and the cool night air was blowing in. There was a moon, and I could just see that the window looked out into a courtyard, on the other side of which was a high wall that surrounded Li Ting-Fang's premises.

"I sat down on the earth floor. The first thing I tried to do was to loosen the cords around my wrists, for I felt, if it was possible, it would be better to die struggling with my captors. Just a leetle did I loosen them, but I could not undo the knots or slip my hands free—only I had a trifle more movement in them.

"Well, I must not make my story too long or dwell upon my feelings. After what must have been hours, I think I fell asleep, sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall.

. . . .

"I woke with a start. Something seemed to have made a leetle noise in the room. It was very dark, for the moon had set, and I could see nothing. Again! Something fell in from the window. I sprang to my feet, and asked softly, 'Who is there?' And I received a reply. It was simply, 'Sh-sh-ish!' Then I heard something being pushed through the aperture, which fell with a heavy thud on the floor.

"Immediately I sat down and groped behind me with my bound hands. And I felt several things tied together with a string, and a ray of hope came into my heart. One of the things was a small open knife. In one minute I had managed with it to cut the cord around one wrist. My hands were free. Then—oh, my friends, you can imagine my joy when I felt all that was there—a revolver, several tools, a small electric-torch, and what appeared to be paper. Very carefully I turned on the torch, first taking off my tunic and stuffing it into the leetle window so that no light should show outside. The paper was an envelope. I tore it open, and found inside this message in English—

"'If you are able to do so quietly, try to pick the lock of the door. There are no bolts —only the lock. If not, at *exactly* 7 o'clock in the morning, you must take your chance and blow open the lock with your pistol. In either case, leave your room *exactly* at 7. Go straight along the corridor. Shoot any one who hinders you, and make your way to the main entrance. I am trying to do all I can to help, but there are difficulties. If I fail, you must do your best to escape.— F. L.'

"My first thought was, 'Why does he not telegraph for soldiers?' Ah, I did not know then that Li Ting-Fang had seen that the wires were cut on either side of the station far along the line. Linthorpe had already discovered this.

"I looked at my watch. It was just after four. I had three hours. Immediately I made examination of the door—and then I rejoiced. The supporting beam at the side was of thick hard wood, into which the bolt of the great rough Chinese lock apparently shot. And one of my tools was a good sharp chisel. Ah, it took me long to cut away that wood, but at last I did so, and it was as I had hoped. The bolt became visible, and I found I could open the door inwards. It would not be necessary to blow open the lock. Then I waited.

"A leetle before seven I prepared myself. My revolver was loaded in six chambers, and there were a dozen extra cartridges. I determined, if the worst came, to save one of them for myself. Exactly at the hour I opened the door. I had the revolver in my right hand, and the chisel in my left. It was quite quiet outside, but when I reached the top of the steps and turned into the corridor I nearly ran into a man—a sentry—who stood with his back to me. I paused a moment—then changed the chisel into my right hand, crept forward, and aimed at his neck. He fell all in a heap. Splendid!

"Then I went on—very softly. The door of the room into which I had been taken the previous evening stood open, and I had to pass it. I tripped slightly on a rug, and held my breath. Then a voice came from the room—

"'Is that you, Koravitch? Come in!'

"I started with astonishment. I entered the room. And I will tell you what I saw.

"Standing in the middle of the room was Linthorpe. And he did not look at all like a missionary. He was dressed in Chinese costume—very fine! And he held in his hand a revolver, which was pointed straight at the head of Li Ting-Fang, who sat in a chair with his fat hands above his head and his yellow face gone white. And Linthorpe, without looking away from the Mandarin, gave a little laugh, and said—

"'That's all right. Now we'll get out of this. Listen you, Ting-Fang! You will walk with us to the outer gate, and if you so much as speak one word to your men, I shoot. Do you understand?'

"Li Ting-Fang looked at him venomously, and said in his soft silky voice—

"'May heaven curse your swine-begotten ancestors!'

"'It isn't a question of ancestors, my friend, unless you want to join your own. Get up!'

"As we walked, he held the revolver pressed against the back of the Mandarin's head. Oh, he was not converting Chinamen at the moment, this brave missionary. I have said he ought to have been a soldier. Splendid! There were two or three men in the courtyard, and one of them made as if he would have attacked us, and then drew back. So we reached the gate.

"I was wondering if we should take prisoner the Mandarin. But, even at that moment, he was very clever. Just as we were passing through the gate he suddenly dropped down, and caught Linthorpe's leg as he did so. Linthorpe stumbled forward, and I half fell over him. The next moment Li Ting-Fang, yelling something in Chinese, had rolled on one side, picked himself up in a very quick manner for one so fat, and was behind a pillar even before I shot at him. A shot followed from behind, and a bullet whistled past us.

"'Run!' cried Linthorpe. Ah, and we *did* run. I laugh now as I think of the missionary drawing up his loose robe above his bare knees. It was *very* funnee! They fired—yes—but they were bad marksmen, those Chinese, and, except for a little scratch on my side, they did not hit. So we came out safely. Splendid!

"Afterwards, when Miss Linthorpe gave us a good breakfast, her brother told me the story. Oh, he was a very clever man, this missionary priest. It was due to Chang-Yung that he had discovered where I was. Chang-Yung had seen me in the corridor. He had also guessed what was to happen to me in the morning—there had been some nasty orders given—ugh! It makes me shiver even now. He knew I was the friend of Mr. Linthorpe. Also that I had rescued his sister, to whom he was much devoted. So he climbed the wall of the compound, and hurried to Mr. Linthorpe. The missionary immediately went to the station to telegraph for assistance, but found the instruments would not work, and also found the two engineers very drunk. It was then he took their revolvers, for a plan was coming into his mind. He knew I must be rescued early—or——"

And Captain Ivan Koravitch shrugged his shoulders, and gave an expressive sound with his lips.

"But it was Nora Linthorpe who thought out the clever scheme. She collected curiosities to take back to England, and had a fine Chinese costume. Also she possessed the big visiting-card of Wu-yao-chan, the governor of the province—the English consul had presented it to her for her collection,—and her brother knew a leetle Chinese. So he wrote the letter to me, and made up the parcel for Chang-Yung to put through my window, hoping that the luck of being able to open my door would come to me. Then he dressed himself in the Chinese dress, and with Chang-Yung's help, who had returned, painted with a brush in Chinese characters a short letter demanding a private interview of importance. Also, he rubbed some yellow powder on his face. Chang-Yung found a friend whom he could trust, and together they carried him in a chair to Li Ting-Fang's house. A call in the very early morning—when much business is done—is customary with the Chinese. Linthorpe sent in Wu-yao-chan's card, and was shown into the reception-room. When the Mandarin entered he performed a very big kow-tow, for he thought he was in the presence of the governor. But when he looked up the pistol was at his head, and he had to hold his tongue till I appeared. Splendid!"

The captain lighted a fresh cigarette, paused for a minute or two, and then said—

"Miss Nora? Ah, yes! I kissed her hands. I think she was very much pleased. Also she was pleased that I was safe. I think, too—but—no matter. She had promised herself to another. Pouf! Li Ting-Fang? Oh, he escaped. When my soldiers, who returned, surrounded his house, it was empty. But one can never understand these Chinese. A few years later, after our war with Japan, I was in Paris. Our ambassador there gave a diplomatic dinner, at which I was present. Next to me sat an elderly Chinaman, an attaché at the Chinese Embassy. It was no other than Li Ting-Fang. And he said to me very politely, in his voice of silk and with his smile—

"'Did I not once have the pleasure of receiving you at my insignificant abode?'

"'Yes,' I replied, as I looked him hard in the face, 'and I fear my departure from your honourable presence was very abrupt.'

"'No one regretted it more than my entirely unworthy self!' he answered with a bow. Splendid!"

Chuang Chou and the Butterfly

By LI-PO

Translated by Shigeyoshi Obata

古風

CHUANG CHOU in dream became a butterfly,
  And the butterfly became Chuang Chou at waking.
Which was the real—the butterfly or the man?
Who can tell the end of the endless changes of things?
The water that flows into the depth of the distant sea
Returns anon to the shallows of a transparent stream.
The man, raising melons outside the green gate of the city,
Was once the Prince of the East Hill.
So must rank and riches vanish.
You know it, still you toil and toil,—what for?

Some Men I Have Met

THE MAN WHO DID HIMSELF JUSTICE

Luckily, he had never (oh! never) been obliged to doubt that excellent opinion of himself, which he liked to express thus, in his moments of rhetorical expansion:

"My whole life gives me the right to shake hands with myself." de Maupassant.

THE COLONEL

Father kept a drug store. His name, including his title, was Colonel John Spotteswood Langston. He had simply gravitated into the drug business because it was the least profitable. He was the only aristocrat and by the same token the laziest man and the most influential citizen in Booneville. He was a tall, withered-looking person, with an unbecoming military mustache and a nose that proclaimed his lineage. It was immense, like a noble monument to many honourable ancestors. The rest of his face seemed to draw back from it, as if unworthy of a too intimate association. I do not know whether my mother respected him or whether she merely accepted him as women do curious dispensations of Providence. Corra Harris.

OLD MACK

One evening old Mack spoke up and asked me if I was much apprised in the habits and policies of women folks.

"Why, yes," says I, in a tone of voice; "I know 'em from Alfred to Omaha. The feminine nature and similitude," says I, "is as plain to my sight as the Rocky Mountains to a blue-eyed burro. I'm onto all their little side-steps and punctual discrepancies."

"I tell you, Andy," says Mack with a kind of sigh, "I never had the least amount of intersection with their predispositions. Maybe I might have had a proneness in respect to their vicinity, but I never took the time. I made my own living since I was fourteen; and I never seemed to get my ratiocinations equipped with the sentiments usually depicted toward the sect. I sometimes wish I had," says old Mack. O. Henry.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Rich, handsome, courteous, generous, lord of the Hall, the feast and the dance, he excited his guests to a holiday of flattery. And, says Mrs. Mountstuart, while grand phrases were mouthing round about him: "You see, he has a leg." George Meredith.

PUZZLEHEAD SABRE

"Puzzlehead" they had called him at his preparatory school, old Puzzlehead Sabre, the chap who was always wrinkling up his vest over things and came out with the most extraordinary ideas. He had remained, and increasingly become, the puzzler. And precisely as he had ceased to share a room with Mabel and carried himself with satisfaction to his own apartment, so, by this fifth year of his married life, he had come to know well that he shared no thought with her: he carried them, with increasing absorption in their interest, to the processes of his own mind. A. S. M. HUTCHINSON.

⁂

THE WOODCHOPPER WHO WAS NEVER TIRED

He particularly reverenced the writer and the preacher. Their performances were miracles. When I told him that I wrote considerably, he thought for a long time that it was merely the handwriting that I meant, for he could write a remarkably good hand himself. I sometimes found the name of his native parish handsomely written in the snow by the highway, with the proper French accent, and knew that he had passed. I asked him if he ever wished to write his thoughts. He said that he had read and written letters for those who could not, but he never tried to write thoughts,—no, he could not, he could not tell what to put first, it would kill him, and then there was spelling to be attended to at the same time. HENRY DAVID THOREAU.

⁂

THE MIGHTY HUNTER

During a quarter of an hour, Tartarin promenaded up and down in the rooms in the midst of his brother marksmen, speaking to them of his journey and his hunting, and promising to send them skins; they put their names down in his memorandum-book for a lion-skin apiece, as waltzers book for a dance.

Gentle and placid as Socrates on the point of quaffing the hemlock, the intrepid Tarasconian had a word and a smile for each. He spoke simply, with an affable mien; it looked as if, before departing, he meant to leave behind him a wake of charms, regret, and pleasant memories! ALPHONSE DAUDET.

⁂

THE ANCIENT MARINER

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?" S. T. COLERIDGE.

⁂

PETER

Thus the days passed and Peter became dreamy and wistful and the charm of his spirit, I believe, was never before so poignant, for his chameleon-soul had taken on the lure of the renaissance and its accompanying spirituality, the spirituality of the artist, the happy working artist contriving works of genius. . . . The revolutionary Peter of New York, the gay faun-like Peter of Paris, had disappeared, and a Peter of reveries and dreams had usurped their place. CARL VAN VECHTEN.

⁂

TITO MELEMA

Genuineness implied confession of the past, and confession involved a change of purpose. But Tito had as little bent that way as a leopard has to lap milk when its teeth are grown. GEORGE ELIOT.

⁂

EFFICIENCY IN ASPIRATION

It was about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day in the week. . . . In its proper column I might mark by a little black spot every fault I found upon examination to have committed respecting that virtue upon that day. I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

THE HUSBAND OF MME. BOVARY

Charles finished by rising in his own esteem for possessing such a wife. He showed with pride in the sitting-room two small pencil sketches by her that he had had framed in very large frames, and hung up against the wall paper by long green cords. People returning from mass saw him at his door in his wool-work slippers.

He came home late,—at ten o'clock, at midnight sometimes. Then he asked for something to eat, and as the servant had gone to bed, Emma waited on him. He took off his coat to dine more at his ease. He told her, one after the other, the people he had met, the villages where he had been, the prescriptions he had written, and, well-pleased with himself, he finished the remainder of the boiled beef and onions, picked pieces off the cheese, munched an apple, emptied his water bottle, and then went to bed, and lay on his back and snored. GUSTAVE FLAUBERT.

"WHERE, WHERE WAS RODERICK THEN?"

"I've a prejudice against tumbling anywhere," Roderick rejoined; "The pleasure of motion for me is seeing where I go. If I don't see I don't move—that is, I but jump up and down in the same place. In other words, I'm an ass unless I'm an angel. You should talk to Gloriani: he's an ass all the while, only an ass for a circus, who can stand on his hind legs and fire off pistols." HENRY JAMES.

MR. JACK

". . . Not less than one journey a week, and not less than a guinea clear profit for each journey. Those are my lowest terms: I will take as much more as I can get, but nothing less. Perhaps you are thinking better of getting the class for me."

"I never break my word, Mr. Jack."

"Ha! Don't you! I do. A fortnight ago I swore never to speak to you again. The same day I swore never to part with your friend's ring except to herself. Well, here I am speaking to you for no better reason than that you met me and offered to put some money my way. And you stopped me in the act of pawning her ring, which I was going to do because I thought I would rather have a beefsteak." GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

JIM BECKWOURTH, INDIAN FIGHTER

The flame of a camp-fire stands up tall and straight toward the black sky. We feed it constantly with sage brush. A circling wall of darkness closes us in; but turn your back to the fire and walk a little away and you shall see the serrated summit line of snow-capped mountains, ghastly cold in the moonlight. They are in all directions; everywhere they efface the great gold stars near the horizon, leaving the little green ones of the mid-heaven trembling viciously, as bleak as steel. At irregular intervals we hear the distant howling of a wolf—now on this side and again on that. We check our talk to listen; we cast quick glances toward our weapons, our saddles, our picketted horses; the wolves may be of the variety known as Sioux, and there are but four of us.

"What would you do, Jim," said Hazen, "if we were surrounded by Indians?"

Jim Beckwourth was our guide—a life-long frontiersman, an old man "beated and chopped with tanned antiquity." He had at one time been a chief of the Crows.

"I'd spit on that fire," said Jim Beckwourth.

The Bet

By ANTON P. CHEKHOV

А Чехов

I

IT WAS a dark autumn night. The old banker was pacing from corner to corner of his study, recalling to his mind the party he gave in the autumn fifteen years before. There were many clever people at the party and much interesting conversation. They talked among other things of capital punishment. The guests, among them not a few scholars and journalists, for the most part disapproved of capital punishment. They found it obsolete as a means of punishment, unfitted to a Christian State, and immoral. Some of them thought that capital punishment should be replaced universally by life-imprisonment.

"I don't agree with you," said the host. "I myself have experienced neither capital punishment nor life-imprisonment, but if one may judge *a priori*, then in my opinion capital punishment is more moral and more humane than imprisonment. Execution kills instantly, life-imprisonment kills by degrees. Who is the more humane executioner, one who kills you in a few seconds or one who draws the life out of you incessantly, for years?"

"They're both equally immoral," remarked one of the guests, "because their purpose is the same, to take away life. The State is not God. It has no right to take away that which it cannot give back, if it should so desire."

Among the company was a lawyer, a young man of about twenty-five. On being asked his opinion, he said:

"Capital punishment and life-imprisonment are equally immoral; but if I were offered the choice between them, I would certainly choose the second. It's better to live somehow than not to live at all."

There ensued a lively discussion. The banker who was then younger and more nervous suddenly lost his temper, banged his fist on the table, and turning to the young lawyer, cried out:

"It's a lie. I bet you two millions you wouldn't stick in a cell even for five years."

"If you mean it seriously," replied the lawyer, "then I bet I'll stay not five but fifteen."

"Fifteen! Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions."

"Agreed. You stake two millions, I my freedom," said the lawyer.

So this wild, ridiculous bet came to pass. The banker, who at that time had too many millions to count, spoiled and capricious, was beside himself with rapture. During supper he said to the lawyer jokingly:

"Come to your senses, young man, before it's too late. Two millions are nothing to me, but you stand to lose three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you'll never stick it out any longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary is much heavier than enforced imprisonment. The idea that you have the right to free yourself at any moment will poison the whole of your life in the cell. I pity you."

And now the banker, pacing from corner to corner, recalled all this and asked himself:

"Why did I make this bet? What's the good? The lawyer loses fifteen years of his life and I throw away two millions. Will it convince people that capital punishment is worse or better than imprisonment for life? No, no! all stuff and rubbish. On my part, it was the caprice of a well-fed man; on the lawyer's pure greed of gold."

He recollected further what happened after the evening party. It was decided that the lawyer must undergo his imprisonment under the strictest observation, in a garden wing of the banker's house. It was agreed that during the period he would be deprived of the right to cross the threshold, to see living people, to hear human voices, and to receive letters and newspapers. He was permitted to have a musical instrument, to read books, to write letters, to drink wine and smoke tobacco. By the agreement he could communicate, but only in silence, with the outside world through a little window specially constructed for this purpose. Everything necessary, books, music, wine, he could receive in any quantity by sending a note through the window. The agreement provided for all the minutest details, which made the confinement strictly solitary, and it obliged the lawyer to remain exactly fifteen years from twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1870, to twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1885. The least attempt on his part to violate the conditions, to escape if only for two minutes before the time freed the banker from the obligation to pay him the two millions.

During the first year of imprisonment, the lawyer, so far as it was possible to judge from his short notes, suffered terribly from loneliness and boredom. From his wing day and night came the sound of the piano. He rejected wine and tobacco. "Wine," he wrote, "excites desires, and desires are the chief foes of a prisoner; besides, nothing is more boring than to drink good wine alone, and tobacco spoils the air in his room." During the first year the lawyer was sent books of a light character; novels with a complicated love interest, stories of crime and fantasy, comedies, and so on.

In the second year the piano was heard no longer and the lawyer asked only for classics. In the fifth year, music was heard again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him said that during the whole of that year he was only eating, drinking, and lying on his bed. He yawned often and talked angrily to himself. Books he did not read. Sometimes at nights he would sit down to write. He would write for a long time and tear it all up in the morning. More than once he was heard to weep.

In the second half of the sixth year, the prisoner began zealously to study languages, philosophy, and history. He fell on these subjects so hungrily that the banker hardly had time to get books enough for him. In the space of four years about six hundred volumes were bought at his request. It was while that passion lasted that the banker received the following letter from the prisoner: "My dear gaoler, I am writing these lines in six languages. Show them to experts. Let them read them. If they do not find one single mistake, I beg you to give orders to have a gun fired off in the garden. By the noise I shall know that my efforts have not been in vain. The geniuses of all ages and countries speak in different languages; but in them all burns the same flame. Oh, if you knew my heavenly happiness now that I can understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. Two shots were fired in the garden by the banker's order.

Later on, after the tenth year, the lawyer sat immovable before his table and read only the New Testament. The banker found it strange that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred erudite volumes, should have spent nearly a year in reading one book, easy to understand and by no means thick. The New Testament was then replaced by the history of religions and theology.

During the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an extraordinary amount, quite haphazard. Now he would apply himself to the natural sciences, then he would read Byron or Shakespeare. Notes used to come from him in which he asked to be sent at the same time a book on chemistry, a text-book of medicine, a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. He read as though he were swimming in the sea among broken pieces of wreckage, and in his desire to save his life was eagerly grasping one piece after another.

II

THE banker recalled all this, and thought: "To-morrow at twelve o'clock he receives his freedom. Under the agreement, I shall have to pay him two millions. If I pay, it's all over with me. I am ruined for ever . . ."

Fifteen years before he had too many millions to count, but now he was afraid to ask himself which he had more of, money or debts. Gambling on the Stock-Exchange, risky speculation, and the recklessness of which he could not rid himself even in old age, had gradually brought his business to decay; and the fearless, self-confident, proud man of business had become an ordinary banker, trembling at every rise and fall in the market.

"That cursed bet," murmured the old man clutching his head in despair. . . . "Why didn't the man die? He's only forty years old. He will take away my last farthing, marry, enjoy life, gamble on the Exchange, and I will look on like an envious beggar and hear the same words from him every day: 'I'm obliged to you for the happiness of my life. Let me help you.' No, it's too much! The only escape from bankruptcy and disgrace—is that the man should die."

The clock had just struck three. The banker was listening. In the house every one was asleep, and one could hear only the frozen trees whining outside the windows. Trying to make no sound, he took out of his safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house. The garden was dark and cold. It was raining. A damp, penetrating wind howled in the garden and gave the trees no rest. Though he strained his eyes, the banker could see neither the ground, nor the white statues, nor the garden wing, nor the trees. Approaching the garden wing, he called the watchman twice. There was no answer. Evidently the watchman had taken shelter from the bad weather and was now asleep somewhere in the kitchen or the greenhouse.

"If I have the courage to fulfil my intention," thought the old man, "the suspicion will fall on the watchman first of all."

In the darkness he groped for the steps and the door and entered the hall of the garden-wing, then poked his way into a narrow passage and struck a match. Not a soul was there. Some one's bed, with no bedclothes on it, stood there, and an iron stove loomed dark in the corner. The seals on the door that led into the prisoner's room were unbroken.

When the match went out, the old man, trembling from agitation, peeped into the little window.

In the prisoner's room a candle was burning dimly. The prisoner himself sat by the table. Only his back, the hair on his head and his hands were visible. Open books were strewn about on the table, the two chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner never once stirred. Fifteen years' confinement had taught him to sit motionless. The banker tapped on the window with his finger, but the prisoner made no movement in reply. Then the banker cautiously tore the seals from the door and put the key into the lock. The rusty lock gave a hoarse groan and the door creaked. The banker expected instantly to hear a cry of surprise and the sound of steps. Three minutes passed and it was as quiet inside as it had been before. He made up his mind to enter.

Before the table sat a man, unlike an ordinary human being. It was a skeleton, with a tight-drawn skin, with long curly hair like a woman's, and a shaggy beard. The colour of his face was yellow, of an earthy shade; the cheeks were sunken, the back long and narrow, and the hand upon which he leaned his hairy head was so lean and skinny that it was painful to look upon. His hair was already silvering with grey, and no one who glanced at the senile emaciation of the face would have believed that he was only forty years old. On the table, before his bended head, lay a sheet of paper on which something was written in a tiny hand.

"Poor devil," thought the banker, "he's asleep and probably seeing millions in his dreams. I have only to take and throw this half-dead thing on the bed, smother him a moment with the pillow, and the most careful examination will find no trace of unnatural death. But, first, let us read what he has written here."

The banker took the sheet from the table and read:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock midnight, I shall obtain my freedom and the right to mix with people. But before I leave this room and see the sun I think it necessary to say a few words to you. On my own clear conscience and before God who sees me I declare to you that I despise freedom, life, health, and all that your books call the blessings of the world.

"For fifteen years I have diligently studied earthly life. True, I saw neither the earth nor the people, but in your books I drank fragrant wine, sang songs, hunted deer and wild boar in the forests, loved women. . . . And beautiful women, like clouds ethereal, created by the magic of your poets' genius, visited me by night and whispered to me wonderful tales, which made my head drunken. In your books I climbed the summits of Elbruz and Mont Blanc and saw from there how the sun rose in the morning, and in the evening suffused the sky, the ocean and the mountain ridges with a purple gold. I saw from there how above me lightnings glimmered cleaving the clouds; I saw green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, cities; I heard syrens singing, and the playing of the pipes of Pan; I touched the wings of beautiful devils who came flying to me to speak of God. . . . In your books I cast myself into bottomless abysses, worked miracles, burned cities to the ground, preached new religions, conquered whole countries. . . .

"Your books gave me wisdom. All that unwearying human thought created in the centuries is compressed to a little lump in my skull. I know that I am cleverer than you all.

"And I despise your books, despise all worldly blessings and wisdom. Everything is void, frail, visionary and delusive as a mirage. Though you be proud and wise and beautiful, yet will death wipe you from the face of the earth like the mice underground; and your posterity, your history, and the immortality of your men of genius will be as frozen slag, burnt down together with the terrestrial globe.

"You are mad, and gone the wrong way. You take falsehood for truth, and ugliness for beauty. You would marvel if suddenly apple and orange trees should bear frogs and lizards instead of fruit, and if roses should begin to breathe the odour of a sweating horse. So do I marvel at you, who have bartered heaven for earth. I do not want to understand you.

"That I may show you in deed my contempt for that by which you live, I waive the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise, and which I now despise. That I may deprive myself of my right to them, I shall come out from here five minutes before the stipulated term, and thus shall violate the agreement."

When he had read, the banker put the sheet on the table, kissed the head of the strange man, and began to weep. He went out of the wing. Never at any other time, not even after his terrible losses on the Exchange, had he felt such contempt for himself as now. Coming home, he lay down on his bed, but agitation and tears kept him a long time from sleeping. . . .

The next morning the poor watchman came running to him and told him that they had seen the man who lived in the wing climb through the window into the garden. He had gone to the gate and disappeared. The banker instantly went with his servants to the wing and established the escape of his prisoner. To avoid unnecessary rumours he took the paper with the renunciation from the table and, on his return, locked it in his safe.

Misery

I, Dionysius of Tarsus, lie here at sixty, having never married; and I would that my father had not. Unknown Greek Author.

ON HIS OWN INACCESSIBLE TOMB

Here am I laid, my life of misery done.
Ask not my name, I curse you every one. Timon.

⁂

Heavily falls the rain on the hat that I stole from the scarecrow. Lafcadio Hearn.

⁂

I, Lais, whose haughty beauty made mock of Greece, I who once had a swarm of young lovers at my doors, dedicate my mirror to Aphrodite, since I wish not to look on myself as I am, and cannot look on myself as I once was. Plato.

The Handbook of Hymen

By O. HENRY

O. Henry

TIS the opinion of myself, Sanderson Pratt, who sets this down, that the education system of the United States should be in the hands of the weather bureau. I can give you good reasons for it; and you can't tell me why our college professors shouldn't be transferred to the meteorological department. They have been learned to read; and they could very easily glance at the morning papers and then wire in to the main office what kind of weather to expect. But there's the other side of the proposition. I am going on to tell you how the weather furnished me and Idaho Green with an elegant education.

We was up in the Bitter Root Mountains over the Montana line prospecting for gold. A chin-whiskered man in Walla-Walla, carrying a line of hope as excess baggage, had grubstaked us; and there we was in the foothills pecking away, with enough grub on hand to last an army through a peace conference.

Along one day comes a mail-rider over the mountains from Carlos, and stops to eat three cans of green-gages, and leave us a newspaper of modern date. This paper prints a system of premonitions of the weather, and the card it dealt Bitter Root Mountains from the bottom of the deck was "warmer and fair, with light westerly breezes."

That evening it began to snow, with the wind strong in the east. Me and Idaho moved camp into an old empty cabin higher up the mountain, thinking it was only a November flurry. But after falling three foot on a level it went to work in earnest; and we knew we was snowed in. We got in plenty of firewood before it got deep, and we had grub enough for two months, so we let the elements rage and cut up all they thought proper.

If you want to instigate the art of manslaughter just shut two men up in a eighteen by twenty-foot cabin for a month. Human nature won't stand it.

When the first snowflakes fell me and Idaho Green laughed at each other's jokes and praised the stuff we turned out of a skillet and called bread. At the end of three weeks Idaho makes this kind of a edict to me. Says he:

"I never exactly heard sour milk dropping out of a balloon on the bottom of a tin pan, but I have an idea it would be music of the spears compared to this attenuated stream of asphyxiated thought that emanates out of your organs of conversation. The kind of half-masticated noises that you emit every day puts me in mind of a cow's cud, only she's lady enough to keep hers to herself, and you ain't."

"Mr. Green," says I, "you having been a friend of mine once, I have some hesitations in confessing to you that if I had my choice for society between you and a common yellow, three-legged cur pup, one of the inmates of this here cabin would be wagging a tail just at present."

This way we goes on for two or three days, and then we quits speaking to one another. We divides up the cooking implements, and Idaho cooks his grub on one side of the fireplace, and me on the other. The snow is up to the windows, and we have to keep a fire all day.

You see me and Idaho never had any education beyond reading and doing "if John had three apples and James five" on a slate. We never felt any special need for a university degree, though we had acquired a species of intrinsic intelligence in knocking around the world that we could use in emergencies. But, snowbound in that cabin in the Bitter Roots, we felt for the first time that if we had studied Homer or Greek and fractions and the higher branches of information, we'd have had some resources in the line of meditation and private thought. I've seen them Eastern college fellows working in camps all through the West, and I never noticed but what education was less of a drawback to 'em than you would think. Why, once over on Snake River, when Andrew McWilliams' saddle horse got the botts, he sent a buckboard ten miles for one of these strangers that claimed to be a botanist. But that horse died.

One morning Idaho was poking around with a stick on top of a little shelf that was too high to reach. Two books fell down to the floor. I started toward 'em, but caught Idaho's eye. He speaks for the first time in a week.

"Don't burn your fingers," says he. "In spite of the fact that you're only fit to be the companion of a sleeping mud-turtle, I'll give you a square deal. And that's more than your parents did when they turned you loose in the world with the sociability of a rattlesnake and the bedside manner of a frozen turnip. I'll play you a game of seven-up, the winner to pick up his choice of the book, the loser to take the other."

We played; and Idaho won. He picked up his book; and I took mine. Then each of us got on his side of the house and went to reading.

I never was as glad to see a ten-ounce nugget as I was that book. And Idaho looked at his like a kid looks at a stick of candy.

Mine was a little book about five by six inches called "Herkimer's Handbook of Indispensable Information." I may be wrong, but I think that was the greatest book that ever was written. I've got it to-day; and I can stump you or any man fifty times in five minutes with the information in it. Talk about Solomon or the New York *Tribune!* Herkimer had cases on both of 'em. That man must have put in fifty years and travelled a million miles to find out all that stuff. There was the population of all cities in it, and the way to tell a girl's age, and the number of teeth a camel has. It told you the longest tunnel in the world, the number of the stars, how long it takes for chicken pox to break out, what a lady's neck ought to measure, the veto powers of Governors, the dates of the Roman aqueducts, how many pounds of rice going without three beers a day would buy, the average annual temperature of Augusta, Maine, the quantity of seed required to plant an acre of carrots in drills, antidotes for poisons, the number of hairs on a blond lady's head, how to preserve eggs, the height of all the mountains in the world, and the dates of all wars and battles, and how to restore drowned persons, and sunstroke, and the number of tacks in a pound, and how to make dynamite and flowers and beds, and what to do before the doctor comes—and a hundred times as many things besides. If there was anything Herkimer didn't know I didn't miss it out of the book.

I sat and read that book for four hours. All the wonders of education was compressed in it. I forgot the snow, and I forgot that me and old Idaho was on the outs. He was sitting still on a stool reading away with a kind of partly soft and partly mysterious look shining through his tan-bark whiskers.

"Idaho," says I, "what kind of a book is yours?"

Idaho must have forgot, too, for he answered moderate, without any slander or malignity.

"Why," says he, "this here seems to be a volume by Homer K. M."

"Homer K. M. what?" I asked.

"Why, just Homer K. M.," says he.

"You're a liar," says I, a little riled that Idaho should try to put me up a tree. "No man is going 'round signing books with his initials. If it's Homer K. M. Spoopendyke, or Homer K. M. McSweeney, or Homer K. M. Jones, why don't you say so like a man instead of biting off the end of it like a calf chewing off the tail of a shirt on a clothes-line?"

"I put it to you straight, Sandy," says Idaho, quiet. "It's a poem book," says he, "by Homer K. M. I couldn't get colour out of it at first, but there's a vein if you follow it up. I wouldn't have missed this book for a pair of red blankets."

"You're welcome to it," says I. "What I want is a disinterested statement of facts for the mind to work on, and that's what I seem to find in the book I've drawn."

"What you've got," says Idaho, "is statistics, the lowest grade of information that exists. They'll poison your mind. Give me old K. M.'s system of surmises. He seems to be a kind of a wine agent. His regular toast is 'nothing doing,' and he seems to have a grouch, but he keeps it so well lubricated with booze that his worst kicks sound like an invitation to split a quart. But it's poetry," says Idaho, "and I have sensations of scorn for that truck of yours that tries to convey sense in feet and inches. When it comes to explaining the instinct of philosophy through the art of nature, old K. M. has got your man beat by drills, rows, paragraphs, chest measurement, and average annual rainfall."

So that's the way me and Idaho had it.

Day and night all the excitement we got was studying our books. That snowstorm sure fixed us with a fine lot of attainments apiece. By the time the snow melted, if you had stepped up to me suddenly and said: "Sanderson Pratt, what would it cost per square foot to lay a roof with twenty by twenty-eight tin at nine dollars and fifty cents per box?" I'd have told you as quick as light could travel the length of a spade handle at the rate of one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles per second. How many can do it? You wake up 'most any man you know in the middle of the night, and ask him quick to tell you the number of bones in the human skeleton exclusive of the teeth, or what percentage of the vote of the Nebraska Legislature overrules a veto. Will he tell you? Try him and see.

About what benefit Idaho got out of his poetry book I didn't exactly know. Idaho boosted the wine-agent every time he opened his mouth; but I wasn't so sure.

This Homer K. M., from what leaked out of his libretto through Idaho, seemed to me to be a kind of a dog who looked at life like it was a tin can tied to his tail. After running himself half to death, he sits down, hangs his tongue out, and looks at the can and says:

"Oh, well, since we can't shake the growler, let's get it filled at the corner, and all have a drink on me."

Besides that, it seems he was a Persian; and I never hear of Persia producing anything worth mentioning unless it was Turkish rugs and Maltese cats.

That spring me and Idaho struck pay ore. It was a habit of ours to sell out quick and keep moving. We unloaded on our grubstaker for eight thousand dollars apiece; and then we drifted down to this little town of Rosa, on the Salmon River, to rest up, and get some human grub, and have our whiskers harvested.

Rosa was no mining-camp. It laid in the valley, and was as free of uproar and pestilence as one of them rural towns in the country. There was a three-mile trolley line champing its bit in the environs; and me and Idaho spent a week riding on one of the cars, dropping off of nights at the Sunset View Hotel. Being now well read as well as travelled, we was soon *pro re nata* with the best society in Rosa, and was invited out to the most dressed-up and high-toned entertainments. It was at a piano recital and quail-eating contest in the city hall, for the benefit of the fire company, that me and Idaho first met Mrs. De Ormond Sampson, the queen of Rosa society.

Mrs. Sampson was a widow, and owned the only two-story house in town. It was painted yellow, and whichever way you looked from you could see it as plain as egg on the chin of an O'Grady on a Friday. Twenty-two men in Rosa besides me and Idaho was trying to stake a claim on that yellow house.

There was a dance after the song books and quail bones had been raked out of the Hall. Twenty-three of the bunch galloped over to Mrs. Sampson and asked for a dance. I side-stepped the two-step, and asked permission to escort her home. That's where I made a hit.

On the way home says she:

"Ain't the stars lovely and bright to-night, Mr. Pratt?"

"For the chance they've got," says I, "they're humping themselves in a mighty creditable way. That big one you see is sixty-six billions of miles distant. It took thirty-six years for its light to reach us. With an eighteen-foot telescope you can see forty-three millions of 'em, including them of the thirteenth magnitude, which, if one was to go out now, you would keep on seeing it for twenty-seven hundred years."

"My!" says Mrs. Sampson. "I never knew that before. How warm it is! I'm as damp as I can be from dancing so much."

"That's easy to account for," says I, "when you happen to know that you've got two million sweat-glands working all at once. If every one of your perspiratory ducts, which are a quarter of an inch long, was placed end to end, they would reach a distance of seven miles."

"Lawsy!" says Mrs. Sampson. "It sounds like an irrigation ditch you was describing, Mr. Pratt. How do you get all this knowledge of information?"

"From observation, Mrs. Sampson," I tells her. "I keep my eyes open when I go about the world."

"Mr. Pratt," says she, "I always did admire a man of education. There are so few scholars among the sap-headed plug-uglies of this town that it is a real pleasure to converse with a gentleman of culture. I'd be gratified to have you call at my house whenever you feel so inclined."

And that was the way I got the good-will of the lady in the yellow house. Every Tuesday and Friday evenings I used to go there and tell her about the wonders of the universe as discovered, tabulated, and compiled from nature by Herkimer. Idaho and the other gay Lutherans of the town got every minute of the rest of the week that they could.

I never imagined that Idaho was trying to work on Mrs. Sampson with old K. M.'s rules of courtship till one afternoon when I was on my way over to take her a basket of wild hog-plums. I met the lady coming down the lane that led to her house. Her eyes was snapping, and her hat made a dangerous dip over one eye.

"Mr. Pratt," she opens up, "this Mr. Green is a friend of yours, I believe."

"For nine years," says I.

"Cut him out," says she. "He's no gentleman!"

"Why, ma'am," says I, "he's a plain incumbent of the mountains, with asperities and the usual failings of a spendthrift and a liar, but I never on the most momentous occasion had the heart to deny that he was a gentleman. It may be that in haberdashery and the sense of arrogance and display Idaho offends the eye, but inside, ma'am, I've found him impervious to the lower grades of crime and obesity. After nine years of Idaho's society, Mrs. Sampson," I winds up, "I should hate to impute him, and I should hate to see him imputed."

"It's right plausible of you, Mr. Pratt," says Mrs. Sampson, "to take up the curmudgeons in your friend's behalf; but it don't alter the fact that he has made proposals to me sufficiently obnoxious to ruffle the ignominy of any lady."

"Why, now, now, now!" says I. "Old Idaho do that! I could believe it of myself sooner. I never knew but one thing to deride in him; and a blizzard was responsible for that. Once while we was snowbound in the mountains he became a prey to a kind of spurious and uneven poetry, which may have corrupted his demeanour."

"It has," says Mrs. Sampson. "Ever since I knew him he has been reciting to me a lot of irreligious rhymes by some person he calls Ruby Ott, and who is no better than she should be, if you judge by her poetry."

"Then Idaho has struck a new book," says I, "for the one he had was by a man who writes under the *nom de plume* of K. M."

"He'd better have stuck to it," says Mrs. Sampson, "whatever it was. And to-day he caps the vortex. I get a bunch of flowers from him, and on 'em is pinned a note. Now, Mr. Pratt, you know a lady when you see her; and you know how I stand in Rosa society. Do you think for a moment that I'd skip out to the woods with a man along with a jug of wine and a loaf of bread, and go singing and cavorting up and down under the trees with him? I take a little claret with my meals, but I'm not in the habit of packing a jug of it into the brush and raising Cain in any such style as that. And of course he'd bring his book of verses along, too. He said so. Let him go on his scandalous picnics alone! Or let him take his Ruby Ott with him. I reckon she wouldn't kick unless it was on account of there being too much bread along. And what do you think of your gentleman friend now, Mr. Pratt?"

"Well, 'm," says I, "it may be that Idaho's invitation was a kind of poetry, and meant no harm. Maybe it belonged to the class of rhymes they call figurative. They offend law and order, but they get sent through the mails on the grounds that they mean something that they don't say. I'd be glad on Idaho's account if you'd overlook it," says I, "and let us extricate our minds from the low regions of poetry to the higher planes of fact and fancy. On a beautiful afternoon like this, Mrs. Sampson," I goes on, "we should let our thoughts dwell accordingly. Though it is warm here, we should remember that at the equator the line of perpetual frost is at an altitude of fifteen thousand feet. Between the latitudes of forty degrees and forty-nine degrees it is from four thousand to nine thousand feet."

"Oh, Mr. Pratt," says Mrs. Sampson, "it's such a comfort to hear you say them beautiful facts after getting such a jar from that minx of a Ruby's poetry!"

"Let us sit on this log at the roadside," says I, "and forget the inhumanity and ribaldry of the poets. It is in the glorious columns of ascertained facts and legalized measures that beauty is to be found. In this very log we sit upon, Mrs. Sampson," says I, "is statistics more wonderful than any poem. The rings show it was sixty years old. At the depth of two thousand feet it would become coal in three thousand years. The deepest coal mine in the world is at Killingworth, near Newcastle. A box four feet long, three feet wide, and two feet eight inches deep will hold one ton of coal. If an artery is cut, compress it above the wound. A man's leg contains thirty bones. The Tower of London was burned in 1841."

"Go on, Mr. Pratt," says Mrs. Sampson. "Them ideas is so original and soothing. I think statistics are just as lovely as they can be."

But it wasn't till two weeks later that I got all that was coming to me out of Herkimer.

One night I was waked up by folks hollering "Fire!" all around. I jumped up and dressed and went out of the hotel to enjoy the scene. When I seen it was Mrs. Sampson's house, I gave forth a kind of yell, and I was there in two minutes.

The whole lower story of the yellow house was in flames, and every masculine, feminine, and canine in Rosa was there, screeching and barking and getting in the way of the firemen. I saw Idaho trying to get away from six firemen who were holding him. They was telling him the whole place was on fire down-stairs, and no man could go in it and come out alive.

"Where's Mrs. Sampson?" I asks.

"She hasn't been seen," says one of the firemen. "She sleeps up-stairs. We've tried to get in, but we can't, and our company hasn't got any ladders yet."

I runs around to the light of the big blaze, and pulls the Handbook out of my inside pocket. I kind of laughed when I felt it in my hands—I reckon I was some daffy with the sensation of excitement.

"Herky, old boy," I says to it, as I flipped over the pages, "you ain't ever lied to me yet, and you ain't ever throwed me down at a scratch yet. Tell me what, old boy, tell me what!" says I.

I turned to "What to Do in Case of Accidents," on page 117. I run my finger down the page, and struck it. Good old Herkimer, he never overlooked anything! It said:

> SUFFOCATION FROM INHALING SMOKE OR GAS.—There is nothing better than flaxseed. Place a few seed in the outer corner of the eye.

I shoved the Handbook back in my pocket, and grabbed a boy that was running by.

"Here," says I, giving him some money, "run to the drug store and bring a dollar's worth of flaxseed. Hurry, and you'll get another one for yourself. Now," I sings out to the crowd, "we'll have Mrs. Sampson!" And I throws away my coat and hat.

Four of the firemen and citizens grabs hold of me. It's sure death, they say, to go in the house, for the floors was beginning to fall through.

"How in blazes," I sings out, kind of laughing yet, but not feeling like it, "do you expect me to put flaxseed in a eye without the eye?"

I jabbed each elbow in a fireman's face, kicked the bark off of one citizen's shin, and tripped the other one with a side hold. And then I busted into the house. If I die first I'll write you a letter and tell you if it's any worse down there than the inside of that yellow house was; but don't believe it yet. I was a heap more cooked than the hurry-up orders of broiled chicken that you get in restaurants. The fire and smoke had me down on the floor twice, and was about to shame Herkimer, but the firemen helped me with their little stream of water, and I got to Mrs. Sampson's room. She'd lost conscientiousness from the smoke, so I wrapped her in the bed clothes and got her on my shoulder. Well, the floors wasn't as bad as they said, or I never could have done it—not by no means.

I carried her out fifty yards from the house and laid her on the grass. Then, of course, every one of them other twenty-two plaintiffs to the lady's hand crowded around with tin dippers of water ready to save her. And up runs the boy with the flaxseed.

I unwrapped the covers from Mrs. Sampson's head. She opened her eyes and says:

"Is that you, Mr. Pratt?"

"S-s-sh," says I. "Don't talk till you've had the remedy."

I runs my arm around her neck and raises her head, gentle, and breaks the bag of flaxseed with the other hand; and as easy as I could I bends over and slips three or four of the seeds in the outer corner of her eye.

Up gallops the village doc by this time, and snorts around, and grabs at Mrs. Sampson's pulse, and wants to know what I mean by any such sandblasted nonsense.

"Well, old Jalap and Jerusalem oakseed," says I, "I'm no regular practitioner, but I'll show you my authority, anyway."

They fetched my coat, and I gets out the Handbook.

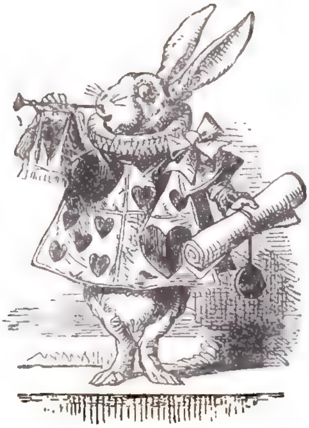
"Look on page 117," says I, "at the remedy for suffocation by smoke or gas. Flaxseed in the outer corner of the eye, it says. I don't know whether it works as a smoke consumer or whether it hikes the compound gastro-hippopotamus nerve into action, but Herkimer says it, and he was called to the case first. If you want to make it a consultation, there's no objection."

Old doc takes the book and looks at it by means of his specs and a fireman's lantern.

"Well, Mr. Pratt," says he, "you evidently got on the wrong line in reading your diagnosis. The recipe for suffocation says: 'Get the patient into fresh air as quickly as possible, and place in a reclining position.' The flaxseed remedy is for 'Dust and Cinders in the Eye' on the line above. But, after all——"

"See here," interrupts Mrs. Sampson, "I reckon I've got something to say in this consultation. That flaxseed done me more good than anything I ever tried." And then she raises up her head and lays it back on my arm again, and says: "Put some in the other eye, Sandy, dear."

And so if you was to stop off at Rosa tomorrow, or any other day, you'd see a fine new yellow house with Mrs. Pratt, that was Mrs. Sampson, embellishing and adorning it. And if you was to step inside you'd see on the marble-top centre table in the parlour "Herkimer's Handbook of Indispensable Information," all rebound in red morocco, and ready to be consulted on any subject pertaining to human happiness and wisdom.



The White Rabbit Reads the Evidence

By LEWIS CARROLL

THEY told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him!
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?

I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before.

If I or she should chance to be
Involved in this affair,
He trusts to you to set them free,
Exactly as we were.

My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him, and ourselves, and it.

Don't let him know she liked them best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me.

A Lodging for the Night

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson

IT WAS late in November, 1456. The snow fell over Paris with rigourous, relentless persistence; sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices; sometimes there was a lull, and flake after flake descended out of the black night air, silent, circuitous, interminable. To poor people, looking up under moist eyebrows, it seemed a wonder where it all came from. Master Francis Villon had propounded an alternative that afternoon at a tavern window: was it only Pagan Jupiter plucking geese upon Olympus? or were the holy angels moulting? He was only a poor Master of Arts, he went on; and as the question somewhat touched upon divinity, he durst not venture to conclude. A silly old priest from Montargis, who was among the company, treated the young rascal to a bottle of wine in honor of the jest and grimaces with which it was accompanied, and swore on his own white beard that he had been just such another irreverent dog when he was Villon's age.

The air was raw and pointed, but not far below freezing; and the flakes were large, damp, and adhesive. The whole city was sheeted up. An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm. If there were any belated birds in heaven, they saw the island like a large white patch, and the bridges like slim white spars, on the black ground of the river. High up overhead the snow settled among the tracery of the cathedral towers. Many a niche was drifted full; many a statue wore a long white bonnet on its grotesque or sainted head. The gargoyles had been transformed into great false noses, drooping towards the point. The crockets were like upright pillows swollen on one side. In the intervals of the wind, there was a dull sound of dripping about the precincts of the church.

The cemetery of St. John had taken its own share of the snow. All the graves were decently covered; tall white housetops stood around in grave array; worthy burghers were long ago in bed, be-nightcapped like their domiciles; there was no light in all the neighborhood but a little peep from a lamp that hung swinging in the church choir, and tossed the shadows to and fro in time to its oscillations. The clock was hard on ten when the patrol went by with halberds and a lantern, beating their hands; and they saw nothing suspicious about the cemetery of St. John.

Yet there was a small house, backed up against the cemetery wall, which was still awake, and awake to evil purpose, in that snoring district. There was not much to betray it from without; only a stream of warm vapor from the chimney-top, a patch where the snow melted on the roof, and a few half-obliterated footprints at the door. But within, behind the shuttered windows, Master Francis Villon the poet, and some of the thievish crew with whom he consorted, were keeping the night alive and passing round the bottle.

A great pile of living embers diffused a strong and ruddy glow from the arched chimney. Before this straddled Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk, with his skirts picked up and his fat legs bared to the comfortable warmth. His dilated shadow cut the room in half; and the firelight only escaped on either side of his broad person, and in a little pool between his outspread feet. His face had the beery, bruised appearance of the continual drinker's; it was covered with a network of congested veins, purple in ordinary circumstances, but now pale violet, for even with his back to the fire the cold pinched him on the other side. His cowl had half fallen back, and made a strange excrescence on either side of his bull neck. So he straddled, grumbling, and cut the room in half with the shadow of his portly frame.

On the right, Villon and Guy Tabary were huddled together over a scrap of parchment; Villon making a ballade which he was to call the "Ballade of Roast Fish," and Tabary spluttering admiration at his shoulder. The poet was a rag of a man, dark, little, and lean, with hollow cheeks and thin black locks. He carried his four-and-twenty years with feverish animation. Greed had made folds about his eyes, evil smiles had puckered his mouth. The wolf and pig struggled together in his face. It was an eloquent, sharp, ugly, earthly countenance. His hands were small and prehensible, with fingers knotted like a cord; and they were continually flickering in front of him in violent and expressive pantomime. As for Tabary, a broad, complacent, admiring imbecility breathed from his squash nose and slobbering lips: he had become a thief, just as he might have become the most decent of burgesses, by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human geese and human donkeys.

At the monk's other hand, Montigny and Thevenin Pensete played a game of chance. About the first there clung some flavour of good birth and training, as about a fallen angel; something long, lithe, and courtly in the person; something aquiline and darkling in the face. Thevenin, poor soul, was in great feather: he had done a good stroke of knavery that afternoon in the Faubourg St. Jacques, and all night he had been gaining from Montigny. A flat smile illuminated his face; his bald head shone rosily in a garland of red curls; his little protuberant stomach shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains.

"Doubles or quits?" said Thevenin.

Montigny nodded grimly.

"*Some may prefer to dine in state,*" wrote Villon, "*on bread and cheese on silver plate.* Or, or—help me out, Guido!"

Tabary giggled.

"*Or parsley on a golden dish,*" scribbled the poet.

The wind was freshening without; it drove the snow before it, and sometimes raised its voice in a victorious whoop, and made sepulchral grumblings in the chimney. The cold was growing sharper as the night went on. Villon, protruding his lips, imitated the gust with something between a whistle and a groan. It was an eerie, uncomfortable talent of the poet's, much detested by the Picardy monk.

"Can't you hear it rattle in the gibbet?" said Villon. "They are all dancing the devil's jig on nothing, up there. You may dance, my gallants, you'll be none the warmer! Whew! what a gust! Down went somebody just now! A medlar the fewer on the three-legged medlar-tree!—I say, Dom Nicolas, it'll be cold to-night on the St. Denis Road?" he asked.

Dom Nicolas winked both his big eyes, and seemed to choke upon his Adam's apple. Montfaucon, the great grisly Paris gibbet, stood hard by the St. Denis Road, and the pleasantry touched him on the raw. As for Tabary, he laughed immoderately over the medlars; he had never heard anything more light-hearted; and he held his sides and crowed. Villon fetched him a fillip on the nose, which turned his mirth into an attack of coughing.

"Oh, stop that row," said Villon, "and think of rhymes to 'fish.'"

"Doubles or quits," said Montigny doggedly.

"With all my heart," quoth Thevenin.

"Is there any more in that bottle?" asked the monk.

"Open another," said Villon. "How do you ever hope to fill that big hogshead, your body, with little things like bottles? And how do you expect to get to heaven? How many angels, do you fancy, can be spared to carry up a single monk from Picardy? Or do you think yourself another Elias—and they'll send the coach for you?"

"*Hominibus impossibile,*" replied the monk as he filled his glass.

Tabary was in ecstasies.

Villon filliped his nose again.

"Laugh at my jokes, if you like," he said.

"It was very good," objected Tabary.

Villon made a face at him. "Think of rhymes to 'fish,'" he said. "What have you to do with Latin? You'll wish you knew none of it at the great assizes, when the devil calls for Guido Tabary, clericus—the devil with the hump-back and red-hot finger-nails. Talking of the devil," he added in a whisper, "look at Montigny!"

All three peered covertly at the gamester. He did not seem to be enjoying his luck. His mouth was a little to a side; one nostril nearly shut, and the other much inflated. The black dog was on his back, as people say, in terrifying nursery metaphor; and he breathed hard under the gruesome burden.

"He looks as if he could knife him," whispered Tabary, with round eyes.

The monk shuddered, and turned his face and spread his open hands to the red embers. It was the cold that thus affected Dom Nicolas, and not any excess of moral sensibility.

"Come now," said Villon—"about this ballade. How does it run so far?" And beating time with his hand, he read it aloud to Tabary.

They were interrupted at the fourth rhyme by a brief and fatal movement among the gamesters. The round was completed, and Thevenin was just opening his mouth to claim another victory, when Montigny leaped up, swift as an adder, and stabbed him to the heart. The blow took effect before he had time to utter a cry, before he had time to move. A tremor or two convulsed his frame; his hands opened and shut, his heels rattled on the floor; then his head rolled backward over one shoulder with the eyes wide open, and Thevenin Pensete's spirit had returned to Him who made it.

Everyone sprang to his feet; but the business was over in two two's. The four living fellows looked at each other in rather a ghastly fashion; the dead man contemplating a corner of the roof with a singular and ugly leer.

"My God!" said Tabary; and he began to pray in Latin.

Villon broke out into hysterical laughter. He came a step forward and ducked a ridiculous bow at Thevenin, and laughed still louder. Then he sat down suddenly, all of a heap, upon a stool, and continued laughing bitterly as though he would shake himself to pieces.

Montigny recovered his composure first.

"Let's see what he has about him," he remarked, and he picked the dead man's pockets with a practised hand, and divided the money into four equal portions on the table. "There's for you," he said.

The monk received his share with a deep sigh, and a single stealthy glance at the dead Thevenin, who was beginning to sink into himself and topple sideways off the chair.

"We're all in for it," cried Villon, swallowing his mirth. "It's a hanging job for every man jack of us that's here—not to speak of those who aren't." He made a shocking gesture in the air with his raised right hand, and put out his tongue and threw his head on one side, so as to counterfeit the appearance of one who has been hanged. Then he pocketed his share of the spoil, and executed a shuffle with his feet as if to restore the circulation.

Tabary was the last to help himself; he made a dash at the money, and retired to the other end of the apartment.

Montigny stuck Thevenin upright in the chair, and drew out the dagger, which was followed by a jet of blood.

"You fellows had better be moving," he said, as he wiped the blade on his victim's doublet.

"I think we had," returned Villon, with a gulp. "Damn his fat head!" he broke out. "It sticks in my throat like phlegm. What right has a man to have red hair when he is dead?" And he fell all of a heap again upon the stool, and fairly covered his face with his hands.

Montigny and Dom Nicolas laughed aloud, even Tabary feebly chiming in.

"Cry-baby," said the monk.

"I always said he was a woman," added Montigny, with a sneer. "Sit up, can't you?" he went on, giving another shake to the murdered body. "Tread out that fire, Nick!"

But Nick was better employed; he was quietly taking Villon's purse, as the poet sat limp and trembling on the stool where he had been making a ballade not three minutes before. Montigny and Tabary dumbly demanded a share of the booty, which the monk silently promised as he passed the little bag into the bosom of his gown. In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence.

No sooner had the theft been accomplished than Villon shook himself, jumped to his feet, and began helping to scatter and extinguish the embers. Meanwhile Montigny opened the door and cautiously peered into the street. The coast was clear; there was no meddlesome patrol in sight. Still it was judged wiser to slip out severally; and as Villon was himself in a hurry to escape from the neighbourhood of the dead Thevenin, and the rest were in a still greater hurry to get rid of him before he should discover the loss of his money, he was the first by general consent to issue forth into the street.

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven. Only a few vapours, as thin as moonlight, fleeted rapidly across the stars. It was bitter cold; and by a common optical effect, things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight. The sleeping city was absolutely still; a company of white hoods, a field full of little alps, below the twinkling stars. Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing! Now, wherever he went, he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets; wherever he went he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John; wherever he went he must weave, with his own plodding feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance. He snapped his fingers as if to pluck up his own spirits, and choosing a street at random, stepped boldly forward in the snow.

Two things preoccupied him as he went; the aspect of the gallows at Montfaucon in this bright, windy phase of the night's existence, for one; and for another, the look of the dead man with his bald head and garland of red curls. Both struck cold upon his heart, and he kept quickening his pace as if he could escape from unpleasant thoughts by mere fleetness of foot. Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk; but he was the only moving thing in the white streets, except when the wind swooped round a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spouts of glittering dust.

Suddenly he saw, a long way before him, a black clump and a couple of lanterns. The clump was in motion, and the lanterns swung as though carried by men walking. It was a patrol. And though it was merely crossing his line of march he judged it wiser to get out of eyeshot as speedily as he could. He was not in the humour to be challenged, and he was conscious of making a very conspicuous mark upon the snow. Just on his left hand there stood a great hotel, with some turrets and a large porch before the door; it was half-ruinous, he remembered, and had long stood empty; and so he made three steps of it, and jumped into the shelter of the porch. It was pretty dark inside, after the glimmer of the snowy streets, and he was groping forward with outspread hands, when he stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistances, hard and soft, firm and loose. His heart gave a leap, and he sprang two steps back and stared dreadfully at the obstacle. Then he gave a little laugh of relief. It was only a woman, and she dead. He knelt beside her to make sure upon this latter point. She was freezing cold, and rigid like a stick. A little ragged finery fluttered in the wind about her hair, and her cheeks had been heavily rouged that same afternoon. Her pockets were quite empty; but in her stocking, underneath the garter, Villon found two of the small coins that went by the name of whites. It was little enough; but it was always something; and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money. That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery; and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman, and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life. Henry V. of England, dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France, and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway, before she had time to spend her couple of whites—it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world. Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander; and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips, before the devil got the soul, and the body was left to birds and vermin. He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was feeling, half mechanically, for his purse. Suddenly his heart stopped beating; a feeling of cold scales passed up the back of his legs, and a cold blow seemed to fall upon his scalp. He stood petrified for a moment; then he felt again with one feverish movement; and then his loss burst upon him, and he was covered at once with perspiration. To spendthrifts money is so living and actual—it is such a thin veil between them and their pleasures! There is only one limit to their fortune—that of time; and a spendthrift with only a few crowns is the Emperor of Rome until they are spent. For such a person to lose his money is to suffer the most shocking reverse, and fall from heaven to hell, from all to nothing, in a breath. And all the more if he has put his head in the halter for it; if he may be hanged to-morrow for that same purse, so dearly earned, so foolishly departed! Villon stood and cursed; he threw the two whites into the street; he shook his fist at heaven; he stamped, and was not horrified to find himself trampling the poor corpse. Then he began rapidly to retrace his steps towards the house beside the cemetery. He had forgotten all fear of the patrol, which was long gone by at any rate, and had no idea but that of his lost purse. It was in vain that he looked right and left upon the snow; nothing was to be seen. He had not dropped it in the streets. Had it fallen in the house? He would have liked dearly to go in and see; but the idea of the grisly occupant unmanned him. And he saw besides, as he drew near, that their efforts to put out the fire had been unsuccessful; on the contrary, it had broken into a blaze, and a changeful light played in the chinks of door and window, and revived his terror for the authorities and Paris gibbet.

He returned to the hotel with the porch, and groped about upon the snow for the money he had thrown away in his childish passion. But he could only find one white; the other had probably struck sideways and sunk deeply in. With a single white in his pocket, all his projects for a rousing night in some wild tavern vanished utterly away. And it was not only pleasure that fled laughing from his grasp; positive discomfort, positive pain, attacked him as he stood ruefully before the porch. His perspiration had dried upon him; and although the wind had now fallen, a binding frost was setting in stronger with every hour, and he felt benumbed and sick at heart. What was to be done? Late as was the hour, improbable as was success, he would try the house of his adopted father, the chaplain of St. Benoît.

He ran there all the way, and knocked timidly. There was no answer. He knocked again and again, taking heart with every stroke; and at last steps were heard approaching from within. A barred wicket fell open in the iron-studded door, and emitted a gush of yellow light.

"Hold up your face to the wicket," said the chaplain from within.

"It's only me," whimpered Villon.

"Oh, it's only you, is it?" returned the chaplain; and he cursed him with foul unpriestly oaths for disturbing him at such an hour, and bade him be off to hell, where he came from.

"My hands are blue to the wrist," pleaded Villon; "my feet are dead and full of twinges; my nose aches with the sharp air; the cold lies at my heart. I may be dead before morning. Only this once, father, and before God, I will never ask again!"

"You should have come earlier," said the ecclesiastic coolly. "Young men require a lesson now and then." He shut the wicket and retired deliberately into the interior of the house.

Villon was beside himself; he beat upon the door with his hands and feet, and shouted hoarsely after the chaplain.

"Wormy old fox!" he cried. "If I had my hand under your twist, I would send you flying headlong into the bottomless pit."

A door shut in the interior, faintly audible to the poet down long passages. He passed his hand over his mouth with an oath. And then the humour of the situation struck him, and he laughed and looked lightly up to heaven, where the stars seemed to be winking over his discomfiture.

What was to be done? It looked very like a night in the frosty streets. The idea of the dead woman popped into his imagination, and gave him a hearty fright; what had happened to her in the early night might very well happen to him before morning. And he so young! and with such immense possibilities of disorderly amusement before him! He felt quite pathetic over the notion of his own fate, as if it had been some one else's, and made a little imaginative vignette of the scene in the morning when they should find his body.

He passed all his chances under review, turning the white between his thumb and forefinger. Unfortunately he was on bad terms with some old friends who would once have taken pity on him in such a plight. He had lampooned them in verses; he had beaten and cheated them; and yet now, when he was in so close a pinch, he thought there was at least one who might perhaps relent. It was a chance. It was worth trying at least, and he would go and see.

On the way, two little accidents happened to him which coloured his musings in a very different manner. For, first, he fell in with the track of a patrol, and walked in it for some hundred yards, although it lay out of his direction. And this spirited him up; at least he had confused his trail; for he was still possessed with the idea of people tracking him all about Paris over the snow, and collaring him next morning before he was awake. The other matter affected him quite differently. He passed a street corner, where, not so long before, a woman and her child had been devoured by wolves. This was just the kind of weather, he reflected, when wolves might take it into their heads to enter Paris again; and a lone man in these deserted streets would run the chance of something worse than a mere scare. He stopped and looked upon the place with an unpleasant interest—it was the centre where several lanes intersected each other; and he looked down them all, one after another, and held his breath to listen, lest he should detect some galloping black things on the snow or hear the sound of howling between him and the river. He remembered his mother telling him the story and pointing out the spot, while he was yet a child. His mother! If he only knew where she lived, he might make sure at least of shelter. He determined he would inquire upon the morrow; nay, he would go and see her too, poor old girl! So thinking, he arrived at his destination—his last hope for the night.

The house was quite dark, like its neighbors; and yet after a few taps, he heard a movement overhead, a door opening, and a cautious voice asking who was there. The poet named himself in a loud whisper, and waited, not without some trepidation, the result. Nor had he to wait long. A window was suddenly opened, and a pailful of slops splashed down upon the doorstep. Villon had not been unprepared for something of the sort, and had put himself as much in shelter as the nature of the porch admitted; but for all that, he was deplorably drenched below the waist. His hose began to freeze almost at once. Death from cold and exposure stared him in the face; he remembered he was of phthisical tendency, and began coughing tentatively. But the gravity of the danger steadied his nerves. He stopped a few hundred yards from the door where he had been so rudely used, and reflected with his finger to his nose. He could only see one way of getting a lodging and that was to take it. He had noticed a house not far away, which looked as if it might be easily broken into, and thither he betook himself promptly, entertaining himself on the way with the idea of a room still hot, with a table still loaded with the remains of supper, where he might pass the rest of the black hours and whence he should issue, on the morrow, with an armful of valuable plate. He even considered on what viands and what wines he should prefer; and as he was calling the roll of his favourite dainties, roast fish presented itself to his mind with an odd mixture of amusement and horror.

"I shall never finish that ballade," he thought to himself; and then, with another shudder at the recollection, "Oh, damn his fat head!" he repeated fervently, and spat upon the snow.

The house in question looked dark at first sight; but as Villon made a preliminary inspection in search of the handiest point of attack, a little twinkle of light caught his eye from behind a curtained window.

"The devil!" he thought. "People awake! Some student or some saint, confound the crew! Can't they get drunk and lie in bed snoring like their neighbors! What's the good of curfew, and poor devils of bell-ringers jumping at a rope's end in bell-towers? What's the use of day, if people sit up all night? The gripes to them!" He grinned as he saw where his logic was leading him. "Every man to his business, after all," added he, "and if they're awake, by the Lord, I may come by a supper honestly for once, and cheat the devil."

He went boldly to the door and knocked with an assured hand. On both previous occasions, he had knocked timidly and with some dread of attracting notice; but now when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry, knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding. The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin, phantasmal reverberations, as though it were quite empty; but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near, a couple of bolts were withdrawn, and one wing was opened broadly, as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within. A tall figure of a man, muscular and spare, but a little bent, confronted Villon. The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured; the nose blunt at the bottom, but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows; the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings, and the whole face based upon a thick white beard, boldly and squarely trimmed. Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand-lamp, it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do; but it was a fine face, honourable, rather than intelligent, strong, simple, and righteous.

"You knock late, sir," said the old man in resonant, courteous tones.

Villon cringed, and brought up many servile words of apology; at a crisis of this sort, the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion.

"You are cold," repeated the old man, "and hungry? Well, step in." And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture.

"Some great seigneur," thought Villon, as his host, setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry, shot the bolts once more into their places.

"You will pardon me if I go in front," he said, when this was done; and he preceded the poet up-stairs into a large apartment, warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture: only some gold plate on a sideboard; some folios; and a stand of armour between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls, representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece, and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

"Will you seat yourself," said the old

man, "and forgive me it I leave you? I am alone in my house to-night, and if you are to eat I must forage for you myself."

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself, and began examining the room, with the stealth and passion of a cat. He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios, and investigated the arms upon the shield, and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window curtains, and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass in figures, so far as he could see, of martial import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath, and retaining it with puffed cheeks, looked round and round him, turning on his heels, as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

"Seven pieces of plate," he said. "If there had been ten, I would have risked it. A fine house, and a fine old master, so help me all the saints!"

And just then, hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor, he stole back to his chair, and began humbly toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.

His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He sat down the plate upon the table, motioning Villon to draw in his chair, and going to the sideboard, brought back two goblets, which he filled.

"I drink your better fortune," he said, gravely touching Villon's cup with his own.

"To our better acquaintance," said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur, but Villon was hardened in that matter; he had made mirth for great lords before now, and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands with a ravenous gusto, while the old man, leaning backward, watched him with steady, curious eyes.

"You have blood on your shoulder, my man," he said.

Montigny must have laid his wet hand upon him as he left the house. He cursed Montigny in his heart.

"It was none of my shedding," he stammered.

"I had not supposed so," returned his host quietly. "A brawl?"

"Well, something of that sort," Villon admitted with a quaver.

"Perhaps a fellow murdered?"

"Oh, no, not murdered," said the poet, more and more confused. "It was all fair play—murdered by accident. I had no hand in it, God strike me dead!" he added fervently.

"One rogue the fewer, I dare say," observed the master of the house.

"You may dare to say that," agreed Villon, infinitely relieved. "As big a rogue as there is between here and Jerusalem. He turned up his toes like a lamb. But it was a nasty thing to look at. I dare say you've seen dead men in your time, my lord?" he added, glancing at the armour.

"Many," said the old man. "I have followed the wars, as you imagine."

Villon laid down his knife and fork, which he had just taken up again.

"Were any of them bald?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; and with hair as white as mine."

"I don't think I should mind the white so much," said Villon. "His was red." And he had a return of his shuddering and tendency to laughter, which he drowned with a great draught of wine. "I'm a little put out when I think of it," he went on. "I knew him—damn him! And then the cold gives a man fancies—or the fancies give a man cold, I don't know which."

"Have you any money?" asked the old man.

"I have one white," returned the poet, laughing. "I got it out of a dead jade's stocking in a porch. She was as dead as Cæsar, poor wench, and as cold as a church, with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair. This is a hard world in winter for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me."

"I," said the old man, "am Enguerrand de la Feuillèe, seigneur de Brisetout, bailly du Patatrac. Who and what may you be?"

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence. "I am called Francis Villon," he said, "a poor Master of Arts of this university. I know some Latin, and a deal of vice. I can make chansons, ballades, lais, virelais, and roundels, and I am very fond of wine. I was born in a garret, and I shall not improbably die upon the gallows. I may add, my lord, that from this night forward I am your lordship's very obsequious servant to command."

"No servant of mine," said the knight; "my guest for this evening, and no more."

"A very grateful guest," said Villon politely, and he drank in dumb show to his entertainer.

"You are shrewd," began the old man, tapping his forehead, "very shrewd; you have learning; you are a clerk; and yet you take a small piece of money off a dead woman in the street. Is it not a kind of theft?"

"It is a kind of theft much practised in the wars, my lord."

"The wars are the field of honour," returned the old man proudly. "There a man plays his life upon the cast; he fights in the name of his lord the king, his Lord God, and all their lordships the holy saints and angels."

"Put it," said Villon, "that I were really a thief, should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?"

"For gain but not for honour."

"Gain?" repeated Villon with a shrug. "Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to the others. The men-at-arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many ploughmen swinging on trees about the country; ay, I have seen thirty on one elm, and a very poor figure they made; and when I asked someone how all these came to be hanged, I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men-at-arms."

"These things are a necessity of war, which the low-born must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive overhard; there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity; and, indeed, many follow arms who are no better than brigands."

"You see," said the poet, "you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand; and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep; the farmer grumbles a bit, but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep, and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet; I am only Tom, Dick, or Harry; I am a rogue and a dog, and hanging's too good for me—with all my heart; but just ask the farmer which of us he prefers, just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights."

"Look at us two," said his lordship. "I am old, strong, and honoured. If I were turned from my house tomorrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless, and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside! I fear no man and nothing; I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house, or, if it please the king to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows; a rough, swift death, without hope or honour. Is there no difference between these two?"

"As far as to the moon," Villon acquiesced. "But if I had been born lord of Brisetout, and you have been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any the less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan, and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier, and you the thief?"

"A thief?" cried the old man. "I a thief! If you understood your words, you would repent them."

Villon turned out his hands with a gesture of inimitable impudence. "If your lordship had done me the honour to follow my argument!" he said.

"I do you too much honour in submitting to your presence," said the knight. "Learn to curb your tongue when you speak with old and honourable men, or some one hastier than I may reprove you in a sharper fashion." And he rose and paced the lower end of the apartment, struggling with anger and antipathy. Villon surreptitiously refilled his cup, and settled himself more comfortably in the chair, crossing his knees and leaning his head upon one hand and the elbow against the back of the chair. He was now replete and warm, and he was in no-wise frightened for his host, having gauged him as justly as was possible between two such different characters. The night was far spent, and in a very comfortable fashion after all; and he felt morally certain of a safe departure on the morrow.

"Tell me one thing," said the old man, pausing in his walk. "Are you really a thief?"

"I claim the sacred rights of hospitality," returned the poet. "My lord, I am."

"You are very young," the knight continued.

"I should never have been so old," replied Villon, showing his fingers, "if I had not helped myself with these ten talents. They have been my nursing mothers and my nursing fathers."

"You may still repent and change."

"I repent daily," said the poet. "There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change, let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat, if it were only that he may continue to repent."

"The change must begin in the heart," returned the old man solemnly.

"My dear lord," answered Villon, "do you really fancy that I steal for pleasure? I hate stealing, like any other piece of work or of danger. My teeth chatter when I see a gallows. But I must eat, I must drink, I must mix in society of some sort. What the devil! Man is not a solitary animal—*Cui Deus fœminam tradit.* Make me king's pantler—make me abbot of St. Denis; make me bailly of the Patatrac; and then I shall be changed indeed. But as long as you leave me the poor scholar Francis Villon, without a farthing, why, of course, I remain the same."

"The grace of God is all-powerful."

"I should be a heretic to question it," said Francis. "It has made you lord of Brisetout and bailly of the Patatrac; it has given me nothing but the quick wits under my hat and these ten toes upon my hands. May I help myself to wine? I thank you respectfully. By God's grace, you have a very superior vintage."

The lord of Brisetout walked to and fro with his hands behind his back. Perhaps he was not yet quite settled in his mind about the parallel between thieves and soldiers; perhaps Villon had interested him by some cross-thread of sympathy; perhaps his wits were simply muddled by so much unfamiliar reasoning; but whatever the cause, he somehow yearned to convert the young man to a better way of thinking, and could not make up his mind to drive him forth again into the street.

"There is something more than I can understand in this," he said at length. "Your mouth is full of subtleties, and the devil has led you very far astray; but the devil is only a very weak spirit before God's truth, and all his subtleties vanish at a word of true honour, like darkness at morning. Listen to me once more. I learned long ago that a gentleman should live chivalrously and lovingly to God, and the king, and his lady; and though I have seen many strange things done, I have still striven to command my ways upon that rule. It is not only written in all noble histories, but in every man's heart if he will take care to read. You speak of food and wine, and I know very well that hunger is a difficult trial to endure; but you do not speak of other wants; you say nothing of honour, of faith to God and other men, of courtesy, of love without reproach. It may be that I am not very wise—and yet I think I am—but you seem to me like one who has lost his way and made a great error in life. You are attending to the little wants, and you have totally forgotten the great and only real ones, like a man who should be doctoring toothache on the Judgment Day. For such things as honour and love and faith are not only nobler than food and drink, but indeed I think we desire them more, and suffer more sharply for their absence. I speak to you as I think you will most easily understand me. Are you not, while careful to fill your belly, disregarding another appetite in your heart, which spoils the pleasure of your life and keeps you continually wretched?"

Villon was sensibly nettled under all this sermonizing.

"You think I have no sense of honour!" he cried. "I'm poor enough, God knows! It's hard to see rich people with their gloves, and you blowing in your hands. An empty belly is a bitter thing, although you speak so lightly of it. If you had had as many as I, perhaps you would change your tune. Any way I'm a thief—make the most of that—but I'm not a devil from hell, God strike me dead. I would have you to know I've an honour of my own, as good as yours, though I don't prate about it all day long, as if it was a God's miracle to have any. It seems quite natural to me; I keep it in its box till it's wanted. Why now, look you here, how long have I been in this room with you? Did you not tell me you were alone in the house? Look at your gold plate! You're strong, if you like, but you're old and unarmed, and I have my knife. What did I want but a jerk of the elbow and here would have been you with the cold steel in your bowels, and there would have been me, linking in the streets, with an armful of golden cups! Did you suppose I hadn't wit enough to see that? And I scorned the action. There are your damned goblets, as safe as in a church; there are you, with your heart ticking as good as new; and here am I, ready to go out again as poor as I came in, with my one white that you threw in my teeth! And you think I have no sense of honour—God strike me dead!"

The old man stretched out his right arm. "I will tell you what you are," he said. "You are a rogue, my man, an impudent and black-hearted rogue and vagabond. I have passed an hour with you. Oh! believe me, I feel myself disgraced! And you have eaten and drunk at my table.

But now I am sick at your presence; the day has come, and the night-bird should be off to his roost. Will you go before, or after?"

"Which you please," returned the poet, rising. "I believe you to be strictly honourable." He thoughtfully emptied his cup. "I wish I could add you were intelligent," he went on, knocking on his head with his knuckles. "Age! age! the brains stiff and rheumatic."

The old man preceded him from a point of self-respect; Villon followed, whistling, with his thumbs in his girdle.

"God pity you," said the lord of Brisetout at the door.

"Good-bye, papa," returned Villon with a yawn. "Many thanks for the cold mutton."

The door closed behind him. The dawn was breaking over the white roofs. A chill, uncomfortable morning ushered in the day. Villon stood and heartily stretched himself in the middle of the road.

"A very dull old gentleman," he thought. "I wonder what his goblets may be worth."

Hymn of Creation

From the Rig Veda

WHO was there?
For there was nothing
Since all things were.
Even the intangible spaces of the upper air
Were not.

What covered Creation?
Whence came it?
What wilderness of water clamoured and
Charged like black bulls?

For there was no death,
For immortality had not been dreamt of.
Darkness within darkness spun like discs.
There was no moon,
Nor was yet lit the beacon of day.

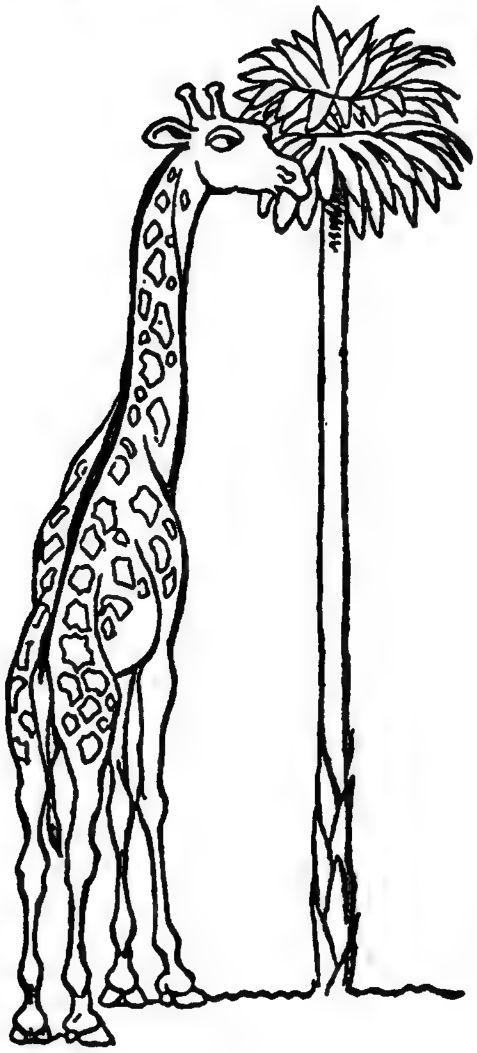
In that swimming chaos who uttered the golden
Cry of Creation?
Who knows it?
Then dare we speak of it!
Are not the Gods who are older than we
Silent?

And yet it is here, the dance of Light around us.
It is like a haze of fire
Resting upon—what?
Ah, He, the ultimate, is witness of all;
But the moment we say He knows
He may not know.

M. Toto, the Complete Explainer

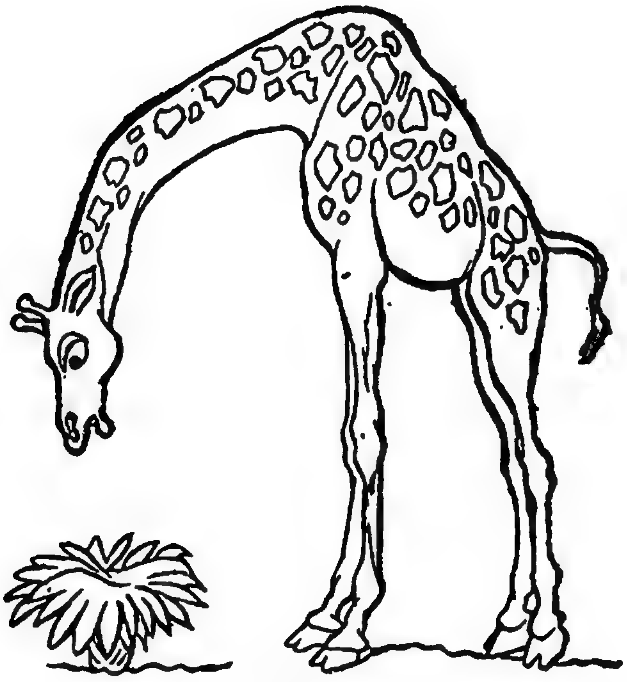
By CARAN D'ACHE
(Emmanuel Poiré)

CARAN D'ACHE



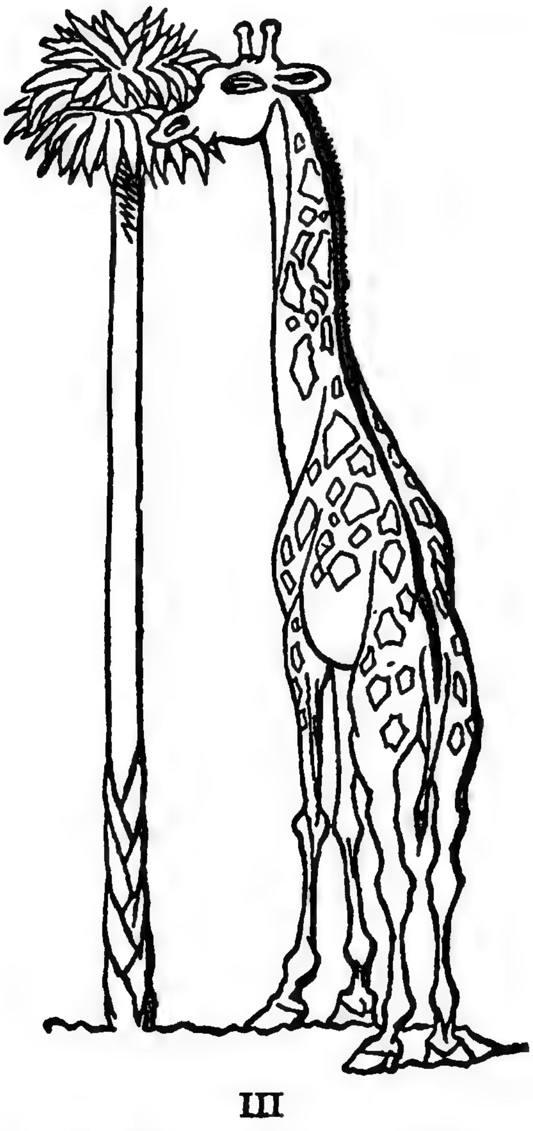
I

"Tell me, papa, *why* are the palm-trees so tall?" "So the giraffes can eat them, my child; for . . .



II

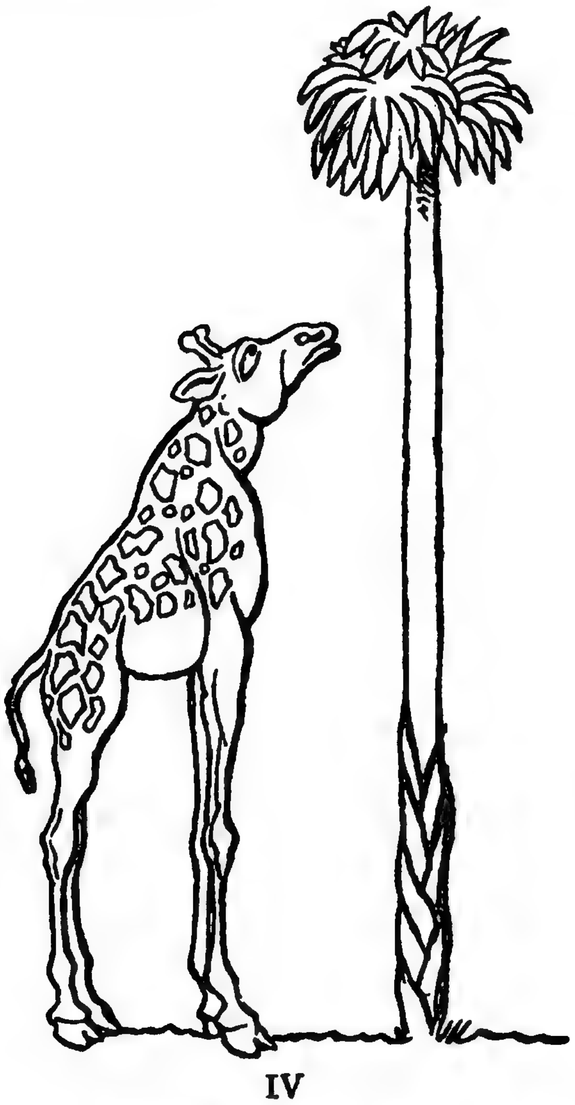
. . . if the palms were little it would be most awkward for the giraffes."



III

"But, papa, why then do the giraffes have such long necks?"

"Why! So they can eat the palms, my boy; for . . .



IV

. . . if giraffes had short necks it would be still more awkward for them."

The Flying Doctor

By MOLIÈRE (JEAN BAPTISTE POCQUELIN)

J. B. P Molière

Acted for the first time in Paris, April 18th, 1659, with Molière himself taking the part of Sganarelle.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

GORGIBUS, *father to* LUCILE.
VALERE, *in love with* LUCILE.
SGANARELLE, *servant to* VALERE.
GROS-RENE, *valet to* GORGIBUS.
A LAWYER.
LUCILE.
SABINE, *cousin to* LUCILE.

SCENE I

VALERE, SABINE.

VALERE—Well, Sabine, what do you advise me to do?

SABINE—I have really much to tell you. My uncle is bent upon marrying my cousin to Villebrequin, and things have gone so far, that I believe the wedding would have taken place to-day if you were not loved by her. However, as my cousin told me the secret of all the love she feels for you, and as we were almost driven to desperation through the avarice of our niggardly uncle, we thought of a capital device to prevent the marriage: at the present moment my cousin affects to be ill, and the foolish old man, who is easily deceived, has just sent me to fetch a doctor. Could you not find one, some friend of yours, who would be on our side, and order the invalid to go into the country for a change of air? The old man will be sure to send my cousin to live in the pavilion, which is at the bottom of our garden. In that way you will be able to see her, unknown to our uncle, and marry her; then let him and Villebrequin curse as much as they please.

VALERE—But what means have I of finding so suddenly the doctor I want, and who would risk so much to serve me? I tell you frankly I know of none.

SABINE—Now I think of it, why don't you have your servant dressed up as a doctor? There is no one more easy to dupe than the old fellow.

VALERE—But Sganarelle is a blockhead who will spoil everything. However, as we have nobody else, we must make use of him. But where shall we find him?—Ah! here he is in the very nick of time. (*Exit* SABINE.)

SCENE II

VALERE, SGANARELLE

VALERE—Ah! my poor Sganarelle, how glad I am to see you! I want your help in a most important business, but as I do not know what you can do . . . .

SGANARELLE—What I can do, sir? Only make use of me in your more important business, in things of consequence: for instance, send me to see what time it is by the clock; send me to the market to ask the price of butter; send me to water a horse; it is then that you will be able to judge of my talents.

VALERE—I ask for none of these things, I want you to play the part of a doctor.

SGANARELLE—I, a doctor, sir! I am ready to do all you please, but as for being a doctor, I say no; I am your servant, I will be nothing of the kind. I ask you how I should set about it; goodness me, sir, you are only laughing at me.

VALERE—If you will try, I will give you ten pistoles.

SGANARELLE—Ah! ten pistoles; well, I I won't say I am no doctor, for you see, sir, I am not so scrupulous as to tell you the whole truth. But supposing I am a doctor, where shall I go?

VALERE—To the old man Gorgibus, to see his daughter who is ill; but you are a blockhead who, instead of doing what we want, might . . . .

SGANARELLE—Ah! sir, don't be anxious; I'll answer for it that I can kill anybody as well as any doctor in the town. The proverb usually, is, "after death comes the doctor," but you will see that if I have anything to do with it, it will be, "after the doctor comes death!" But now, while I think of it, it must be difficult to play the doctor; and if I do nothing right . . . ?

VALERE—There will be nothing difficult to do in this case. Gorgibus is a simpleton, a boor, who will readily believe everything you say, provided you speak to him of Hippocrates, of Galen, and that you have brass enough.

SGANARELLE—You mean that I shall have to speak of philosophy and mathematics? Leave that to me; if he is a man as easily deceived as you say, I answer for everything. You have only to find me a doctor's gown, tell me what you expect from me, and give me my diploma, that is, my ten pistoles. (*Exeunt* VALERE *and* SGANARELLE.)

SCENE III

GORGIBUS, GROS-RENE.

GORGIBUS—Go quickly and fetch the doctor for my daughter who is very ill; make haste!

GROS-RENE—Why the deuce do you think of giving your daughter in marriage to an old man? Don't you see that it is the longing she has for a young one that makes her ill? See the attraction there is, etc.*

GORGIBUS—Go quickly! I am greatly afraid that the wedding will have to be put off on account of this illness.

GROS-RENE—That is what vexes me, for I was looking forward to a good round belly-full, and now I have to do without it. Yes, yes, I'll go to fetch the doctor, but it is as much for my own sake as for your daughter's. I am dreadfully disappointed. (*Exit* GROS-RENE.)

SCENE IV

SABINE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE (*as doctor*).

SABINE—I am glad to meet you, uncle, to tell you of a good piece of news: I bring the cleverest doctor in the world, a man who comes from foreign lands, who knows the most important secrets, and who will no doubt cure my cousin. He was fortunately shown to me, and I bring him to you. He is so clever, that I heartily wish I were ill, so that he might cure me.

GORGIBUS—Where is he?

SABINE—Close at hand; here he is.

GORGIBUS—Doctor, I am your very humble servant. I sent for you, to come and see my daughter who is ill; I put all my hopes in you.

SGANARELLE — Hippocrates says, and Galen too, with strong reasoning argues, that a person does not feel well when he is ill. You are right to put all your hopes in me, for I am the greatest, the cleverest, the wisest doctor in the vegetable, animal, and mineral faculty.

GORGIBUS—I am delighted to hear it.

SGANARELLE—Do not imagine that I am an ordinary doctor, a common doctor. All other doctors compared to me are abortions. I possess wonderful talents; I am master of many secrets. *Salamalec, salamalec.* "Hast thou courage, Rodrigo?" *Signor, si; signor, non. Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.* Still, let us see a little. (*Feels Gorgibus's pulse.*)

SABINE—Eh! He is not the patient; it is his daughter who is ill.

SGANARELLE—It does not matter: the blood of the father and that of the daughter are the same; and by the deterioration of the blood of the father, I can know the illness of the daughter.

GORGIBUS—Ah! doctor, I am greatly afraid that my daughter will die

SGANARELLE—S'death! she must not! she must not indeed have the pleasure of dying before she has the doctor's prescription. But, Mr. Gorgibus, can I see your daughter?

SABINE—She is up; I will bring her if you like.

SCENE V

SABINE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE (*as doctor*), LUCILE.

SGANARELLE—Well, young lady, so you are ill?

LUCILE—Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE—So much the worse; it is a proof that you are not quite well. Do you feel great pains in your head and back?

LUCILE—Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE—I thought so. Yes, the great doctor I spoke of, in the chapter he made on the nature of animals, said . . . . a hundred fine things; and how the humours which have connexion, have much relation to each other, for instance, as melancholy is the enemy to joy, and as the bile in going through our body makes us become yellow, and as nothing is more contrary to good health than illness; so we can say with that great man that your daughter is very ill. I must give her a prescription.

GORGIBUS—Quick! a table, paper and ink!

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* The actor seems in this place to have been left to add any nonsense that came into his head. The MS. has " . . . &c. (*galimatias*)."

SGANARELLE—Is there anybody here who can write?

GORGIBUS—What! do you not know how to write?

SGANARELLE—Ah! I was forgetting; I have so many things to think of, that I forget the half. . . . I think it is quite necessary for your daughter to have a change of air and that she should go and enjoy herself somewhere in the country.

GORGIBUS—We have a very fine garden, and some rooms attached to it; if you think it will do, I will send her there.

SGANARELLE—Let us go and see the place. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI

THE LAWYER.

LAWYER—I have heard that the daughter of Mr. Gorgibus is ill; I must go and inquire after her health, and offer my services, as the friend of the whole family. (*Knocks.*) Is Mr. Gorgibus at home? (*Enter* GORGIBUS) Having heard of your daughter's illness, I come to tell you of my entire sympathy, and to put myself at your disposal for all that may be wanted of me.

GORGIBUS—I have just left the cleverest man in the world.

LAWYER—Would it not be possible to speak with him for a few moments? [GORGIBUS *fetches* SGANARELLE.]

SCENE VII

GORGIBUS, LAWYER, SGANARELLE (*as doctor*).

GORGIBUS—Sir, here is a friend of mine, a very clever man, who would be glad to speak with you.

SGANARELLE—I have no leisure, Mr. Gorgibus; I must go and see my patients. I will not presume to take your place of honour, sir.

LAWYER—Sir, from what Mr. Gorgibus has told me of your merit and talents, I had the greatest longing in the world to be introduced to you, and I have taken the liberty of addressing you on that account. I hope you will not think it too bold. One must acknowledge that those who excel in any great science are worthy of high praise; particularly those whose calling is that of doctor, as much on account of its utility, as because it is the source of several other sciences. Hence it is a difficult one to know perfectly and Hippocrates therefore says truly in his first treatise: *Vita brevis, ars verò longa, occasio autem præceps, experimentum periculosum, judicium, difficile.*

SGANARELLE—(*to* GORGIBUS). *Ficile tantina pota baril cambustibus.*

LAWYER—You are not one of those doctors who only study the medicine called rational or dogmatic, and I believe that you practise it every day with great success,—*experientia magistra rerum.* The first men who practised medicine were held in such consideration because of that wonderful science, that they were numbered among the gods on account of the marvellous cures they performed every day. Not that any one should despise a doctor who has not given back health to his patient, since health does not altogether depend on his remedies or his knowledge: *interdum docta plus valet arte malum.* Sir, I am afraid I am importunate; I must leave you, with the hope that next time we meet I shall have the honour of conversing with you at greater length. Your time is precious. [*Exit* LAWYER].

GORGIBUS—What do you think of that man?

SGANARELLE—He has some trifling knowledge of things. Had he stopped a moment longer I would have made him converse upon a lofty and sublime subject. But now I must leave you (GORGIBUS *offers him money*). Ha! what are you about?

GORGIBUS—I know that I am indebted to you.

SGANARELLE—You are laughing, Mr. Gorgibus! I never take any money, I am not a mercenary man (*takes the money*). Your very humble servant. [*Exit* SGANARELLE; GORGIBUS *goes into his own house.*]

SCENE VIII

VALERE—(*alone*).

I wonder what Sganarelle has done; I have no news from him; I wish I knew where to meet him (SGANARELLE *returns in his usual dress*). Ah! here he is. Well! Sganarelle, and what have you done since I saw you?

SCENE IX

VALERE, SGANARELLE.

SGANARELLE—Worked wonders upon wonders! I have done so well, that Gorgibus really believes me to be a clever doctor. I went to his house, I ordered him to send his daughter to breathe fresh air, and she is now in an apartment at the bottom of their garden, so far from the old man, that you can go and see her without fear of being disturbed.

VALERE—Ah! how happy you make me;

I shall go at once to see her, without losing any more time. [*Exit.*]

SGANARELLE—That old fellow Gorgibus must be a downright fool to allow himself to be deceived in that fashion (*seeing* GORGIBUS). Ah! goodness, all is lost! well, here's a pretty upset for my doctorship! But I must try and take him in once more.

SCENE X

SGANARELLE, GORGIBUS.

GORGIBUS—Good morning, sir.

SGANARELLE—Sir, your servant. You see in me a poor fellow driven to despair. Do you know a doctor who has only lately come to this town, and who performs wonderful cures?

GORGIBUS—Yes, I know him; he has just left my house.

SGANARELLE—I am his brother, sir; we are twins, and we resemble each other like two peas, and are often taken the one for the other.

GORGIBUS—Dev— . . . deuce take me, if I did not make the mistake myself; and what is your name?

SGANARELLE—Narcissus, sir, at your service. You must know that while in his study I upset two bottles full of essence which were on the edge of his table. Will you believe that he was so furious with me, that he actually drove me out of the house, and said he would never see me again; so that here I am a poor destitute fellow, without friends, without help, without anything at all.

GORGIBUS—Don't distress yourself; I will make your peace with your brother. I am his friend, and I promise you that he shall forgive you. I will speak to him the first time I meet him.

SGANARELLE—I shall be much obliged to you, Mr. Gorgibus. [*Exit* SGANARELLE.]

SCENE XI

SGANARELLE (*dressed as a doctor*), GORGIBUS.

SGANARELLE—One must say, that when patients will not follow the advice of the doctor, but give themselves up to excesses . . . .

GORGIBUS—Sir, your very humble servant. I have a favour to ask of you.

SGANARELLE—What is it, sir? Can I be of service to you?

GORGIBUS—Sir, I have just met your brother, who is extremely sorry to . . . .

SGANARELLE—He is a scoundrel, Mr. Gorgibus.

GORGIBUS—I assure you that he is so distressed to have put you in a passion, that . . . .

SGANARELLE—He is a drunkard, Mr. Gorgibus.

GORGIBUS—Eh! sir, do you wish to drive the poor fellow to despair?

SGANARELLE—Do not speak to me of him. Just fancy that scoundrel's impudence to go and ask you to make his peace for him. I beg of you not to speak of him to me.

GORGIBUS—In Heaven's name, sir, do it for my sake! If it is in my power to do anything to oblige you in return, I will do it with all my heart. I gave him my word, and . . . .

SGANARELLE—You entreat me so much, that although I swore I would never forgive him,—here, shake hands, I forgive him. I assure you that I impose a great restraint upon myself, and that I must have great regard for you. Farewell, Mr. Gorgibus. [GORGIBUS *goes into his house; exit* SGANARELLE.]

SCENE XII

VALERE, SGANARELLE.

VALERE—I am forced to acknowledge that I should never have thought that Sganarelle could have done so well. (SGANARELLE *returns in his servant's dress*) Ah! my dear fellow, under what obligation I am to you! how happy I am! and how . . . .

SGANARELLE—Yes, this is all very well, but Gorgibus met me, and if it had not been for a trick I thought of on the spur of the moment, all would have been discovered. (*Seeing* GORGIBUS) Run away; here he is. [*Exit* VALERE.]

SCENE XIII

GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

GORGIBUS—I was looking for you everywhere to tell you that I have spoken to your brother. He has promised me that he will forgive you, but in order that I may be more sure of it, I want him to embrace you in my presence; step into my house, I will go and fetch him.

SGANARELLE—But, Mr. Gorgibus, I don't think you could find him now; besides, I should not like to stop in your house; I dread his anger too much.

GORGIBUS—Indeed! you will stay there, for I shall lock you in. I am going now to fetch your brother: fear nothing; I assure you that he is no longer angry. [*Exit* GORGIBUS.]

SGANARELLE—(*at the window*).—Well! I am caught this time. I see no way of escape. The clouds are very dark, and I greatly fear that, if they break, they will rain hard blows on my back; or that by a prescription stronger even than that of all the doctors, they will apply a royal cautery to my shoulders. But why should I despair? Since I have done so much, I must go on to the end. Yes, yes; I must get clear of all this, and show that Sganarelle is the king of rogues. [SGANARELLE *jumps out of the window and runs away.*]

SCENE XIV

GROS-RENE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

GROS-RENE—Upon my word this is funny! How people jump out of the windows in this place! I must just stop here and see what comes of it. (*Hides.*)

GORGIBUS—I cannot find the doctor; I wonder where he went to hide himself. [*Seeing* SGANARELLE *returning with his doctor's gown*]. Ah! here he is. It is not sufficient, sir, to have forgiven your brother, I beg you to give me the satisfaction of seeing you embrace him. He is in my house; I was looking everywhere for you, to ask you to make your peace with him in my presence.

SGANARELLE—You are joking, Mr. Gorgibus; is it not sufficient that I should have forgiven him? I will never see him again.

GORGIBUS—Do it for my sake, sir, I pray.

SGANARELLE—I can refuse you nothing: tell him to come down [*while* GORGIBUS *goes into the house by the door,* SGANARELLE *goes in by the window.*]

GORGIBUS (*at the window*)—Here is your brother waiting for you yonder; he has promised me that he will do all you like.

SGANARELLE (*at the window*)—Mr. Gorgibus, I beg of you to make him come here; let me see him, and ask him, in private, to forgive me, for no doubt he would treat me roughly, and would shame me before everybody. [GORGIBUS *comes out of his house by the door;* SGANARELLE *by the window.*]

GORGIBUS—Very well, I will tell him. Sir, he says that he is thoroughly ashamed and he begs you to come in, so that he may ask you in private to forgive him. Here is the key, you may come in. I beg of you not to refuse me, but give me this satisfaction.

SGANARELLE—There is nothing I can refuse you. You will hear how I will speak to him. [*Within the house.*] Ah! so you are here, scoundrel!—— My brother, I beg your pardon, I assure you it was not my fault—— Profligate wretch! I will teach you to dare importune Mr. Gorgibus, and plague him with your absurdities!—— Ah! my brother . . . . . . —— Hold your tongue, I tell you.—— I would not disoblige . . . —— . . Be silent, rascal——

GROS-RENE (*coming forward*)—Who do you think is in your house at present?

GORGIBUS—Why! it is the Doctor with his brother Narcissus; they have had a quarrel, but they are making it up.

GROS-RENE—Deuce take it, if they are more than one!

SGANARELLE (*within the house*)—Drunkard that you are! I will teach you how to behave. He may well look down! He feels he has done wrong, the good-for-nothing scoundrel! Ah, the hypocrite, how he pretends to be good!

GROS-RENE (*to* GORGIBUS)—Sir, do ask him, just for fun, to make his brother show himself at the window.

GORGIBUS—Very well. Sir, pray make your brother show himself at the window.

SGANARELLE (*from the window*)—He is unworthy of being seen by honourable people; and, besides, I could not bear to have him by the side of me.

GORGIBUS—Sir, do not refuse me this favour, after all those you have granted me.

SGANARELLE (*from the window*)—Truly, Mr. Gorgibus, you have so much power over me that I can refuse you nothing. Show yourself, scoundrel! [*After having disappeared one moment, he reappears as a valet.*] Mr. Gorgibus, I am so much indebted to you. [*Disappears, and reappears again as doctor.*] Well, did you see that picture of drunkenness?

GROS-RENE (*to* GORGIBUS)—I know they are but one, and to prove it, tell him that you want to see them both together.

GORGIBUS—But grant me the favour of showing yourself with him, and of embracing him at the window before me.

SGANARELLE (*from the window*)—It is a thing I would refuse to any one but you; but, to show you that I would do anything for your sake, I consent, though with difficulty, and I wish that he should first ask you to forgive him for the trouble he has given you—— Yes, Mr. Gorgibus, I beg your pardon for having troubled you so much; and I promise you, my brother, in the presence of Mr. Gorgibus, to be so careful in future that you will never have reason to complain. I beg of you not to think any more of what is past. [*He kisses his hat and his ruff, which he has put at the end of his elbow.*]

Gorgibus—Well, did you not see them both?

Gros-Rene—Upon my word, he is a sorcerer!

Sganarelle (*coming out of the house as doctor*)—I give you back the key of your house, sir. I do not wish this scoundrel to come down with me, for he makes me ashamed of him. I would not, for anything, that he should be seen with me in this town, where I have some reputation. You can send him away when you please. I wish you good-morning, and am your humble servant. [*Feigns to go, but, after having thrown down his gown, enters the house by the window.*]

Gorgibus—I must go, and set this poor fellow free. To say the truth, if his brother has forgiven him, it is not before ill-treating him very much. [*Goes into his house, and comes out with* Sganarelle *as a servant.*]

Sganarelle—I thank you very much, sir, for the trouble you have taken and the kindness you have shown me. I shall be obliged to you for it all my life.

Gros-Rene (*to* Gorgibus)—Where do you think the doctor is now?

Gorgibus—He is gone away.

Gros-Rene (*who has picked up* Sganarelle's *gown*)—I hold him under my arm. There is the knave who played the doctor and deceived you; and, while he is deceiving you and playing you off, Valère and your daughter are together, doing all they like.

Gorgibus—Ah! how unfortunate I am! But you shall be hanged! you knave! you scoundrel!

Sganarelle—Why, sir, what good will it do you to hang me? Hear a word or two. I beg of you. It is true that, thanks to my stratagem, my master is with your daughter; but, while serving him, I have done you no wrong. It is a good match for her, both as to birth and money. Believe me, do not make a scandal which would turn to your shame; but send this knave here to the devil along with Villebrequin. But here are our lovers.

Scene XV

Valere, Lucile, Gorgibus, Sganarelle.

Valere—We come to ask you to forgive us.

Gorgibus—I forgive you; and, on seeing such a good son-in-law, think myself happily deceived by Sganarelle. Now, let us all go to the wedding, and drink the health of the company.

Song

By ROBERT BROWNING

SUCH a starved bank of moss
Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!

A Night in Spring

By GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Guy de Maupassant

IT WAS settled that Jeanne was to marry her cousin, Jacques, whom she had known from infancy. They had grown up together without knowing that they loved each other. The young girl was coquettish but innocent in her manner toward him, and when she saw him, kissed him heartily and naturally without any special emotion.

As for him, he thought, quite simply: "She is dainty, my little cousin"; and he regarded her with that sort of instinctive tenderness which a man always feels for a pretty girl. His reflections did not go farther.

One day Jeanne chanced to hear her mother saying to her aunt (her Aunt Alberte, for Aunt Lison had remained unmarried):

"I assure you they will love one another at once, these young people; you will see. As for me, Jacques is exactly the son-in-law I dream of."

And, immediately, Jeanne began to adore her Cousin Jacques. Then she blushed when she saw him; her hand trembled in that of the young man; she cast down her eyes; then she met his glance, and she made modest advances, so as to encourage him to kiss her, and he saw clearly her feelings toward him. He understood, and, in a transport which had in it as much gratified vanity as genuine affection, he clasped his cousin in his arms, whispering in her ear: "I love you! I love you!"

From that time there was nothing between them but billing and cooing, love-making that was rendered easy and natural by their past associations. In the drawing-room Jacques kissed his intended bride in the presence of the three old women, the three sisters, his mother, Jeanne's mother, and Aunt Lison. He often walked out alone with her the whole day in the woods, along the river's bank, through the damp meadows, where the grass was starred with wild flowers. And they looked forward to the day fixed for their marriage without any great impatience, but enveloped, bathed in an exquisite sense of happiness, tasting the unspeakable delight of tender caresses, clinging hand-clasps, impassioned glances, so intense that their very souls seemed to mingle, and vaguely oppressed by a longing as yet undefined, feeling a sort of restlessness on their lips, which called to each other, seeming to watch and wait for each other, and to give promise of future bliss.

Sometimes, when they spent the entire day in these platonic exchanges of tenderness, they felt as night came on a sense of exhaustion, and emitted long-drawn sighs without knowing why, without quite understanding—stifled sighs of expectation.

The two mothers and their sister, Aunt Lison, observed the course of this youthful love with sympathetic smiles. Aunt Lison especially seemed deeply affected as she watched their movements.

She was a little woman of very few words, who always kept in the background, made no noise, put in an appearance only at meal-times, and then went upstairs again to her own room, where she remained nearly always. She had a benevolent air, and a sad, sweet expression in her eyes, but she counted for little in the family.

The two sisters, who were widows, having occupied a certain position in the world, looked upon her as a rather insignificant person. They treated her with an easy familiarity which veiled their somewhat contemptuous regard for the old maid. She used to be called Lise, having been born in the days when Béranger ruled France. When it was seen that she did not marry, and that she was never likely to marry, Lise was changed into Lison. To-day she was "Aunt Lison," an unpretentious, neat old maid, very timid even with her own relatives, who were attached to her with an affection largely the result of habit, mingled with compassion and a sort of kindly indifference.

The young people never went up to her room to kiss her. The maid-servant was the only person that entered her chamber. She went to fetch Aunt Lison whenever they wanted to talk to her. It seemed as if they did not know where that room was situated—that room where in solitude all that poor life had ebbed away. They paid little attention to her. When they did not see her they never spoke about her, never bestowed a thought on her. She was one of those retiring creatures who remain strangers even to their kinsfolk, as if they belonged to an unexplored region of humanity, whose death would cause no gap, no void in a household, one of these beings who cannot share in the existence, the habits, or the love of those who live side by side with them.

She always went about with short, quick, silent steps, never knocking against anything, and apparently imparting to inanimate objects her own noiseless attitude. Her hands appeared to be made of some kind of cotton wool, so lightly and delicately did they handle whatever they touched.

When the two words, "Aunt Lison," were mentioned, they awakened no idea in any one's mind. It was as if one had said "the coffee-pot," or "the sugar-basin."

The dog, Loute, certainly possessed a much more marked personality. She was constantly petted, and they called her "My dear Loute, my lovely Loute, my little Loute." Her loss would have been mourned much more than that of the old maid.

The marriage of the cousins was to take place at the end of May. The young couple lived in each other's eyes, their hands always clasped, with the same thoughts, the same feelings. The late, lingering spring, chilly from the white frosts at night and the cool haze that followed in the mornings, had suddenly made all things burst out into bloom.

A few warm days had awakened the sap, opened the leaves, and spread abroad the tender breath of young leaf buds and early flowers. Jeanne and Jacques, filled with unutterable bliss, but more timid than usual, remained all day sitting on a bench in front of the house, not venturing any longer to wander very far alone, and gazing with vague glances toward the pond, a short distance away, where stately swans were pursuing each other.

As evening came on, they felt more tranquil, and after dinner they would lean out of the open window in the drawing-room, talking softly, while the two mothers were playing piquet and Aunt Lison was knitting stockings for the poor of the neighbourhood.

A tall hedge extended in the distance behind the pond, and through the still scanty foilage the moon suddenly appeared. It had gradually risen and could be seen through the branches, and as it climbed the sky, amid the stars which it outshone, it shed over the earth that melancholy light in which float white vapors and dreamlike forms so dear to the tender-hearted, to poets, and to lovers.

The young people had glanced at the moon, then, tempted by the beauty of the night, they strolled slowly along, and walked across the wide stretch of moonlit sward till they came to the pond.

As soon as the ladies had finished the customary four games of piquet, they wished to retire.

"We must call in the children," said one of them.

The other cast a rapid glance toward the pale horizon, where two shadows were slowly moving along.

"Let them alone," she said; "it is such a lovely night. Lison will sit up and wait for them. Will you not, Lison?"

The old maid raised her anxious eyes, and in her timid voice replied:

"Certainly, I'll wait for them."

And the two sisters went off to bed.

Then, in her turn, Aunt Lison rose up, and, laying down her work by the side of her armchair, the wool which she had been knitting and the long needle, she went to the long window, and, standing there quietly in the opening, she looked out into the moonlight. The two lovers walked on across the grass without stopping, and kept pacing from the pond to the doorstep, and from the doorstep to the pond. They pressed each other's fingers, without speaking, as if they were disembodied and had blended with the embodied poetry exhaled from the earth. Jeanne suddenly saw the figure of the old maid distinctly outlined by the lamplight, as if it were framed in the window.

"Why," she said, "there is Aunt Lison looking at us."

Jacques raised his head. "Yes," he answered, "Aunt Lison is looking at us."

And they went on slowly, still in a love dream.

But the dew was falling, and the cool air made them shiver a little.

"Let us go in now," she said.

And they reëntered the house.

When they reached the parlor, Aunt Lison had resumed her knitting. Her forehead was bent over her work, and her thin little fingers trembled slightly as if they were very tired.

Jeanne came over to her.

"Aunt, we are going to bed now."

The old maid fixed her eyes on the girl. They were red, as if she had been crying. Jacques and his future bride paid no heed to this. But the young man noticed that his sweetheart's thin shoes were quite wet. He asked anxiously, seized with uneasiness:

"Are not your dear little feet cold?"

And, all of a sudden, the aunt's fingers began to tremble so that her work slipped out of them; the ball of woollen thread rolled down on the floor, and, abruptly covering her face with her hands, the old maid began to weep with violent, convulsive sobs.

The two young people were at her side immediately.

Jeanne, falling on her knees, stretched out her arms excitedly, repeating:

"What's the matter with you, Aunt Lison? What's the matter with you, Aunt Lison?"

Then the poor old maid, in a faltering voice broken by sobs and with her face shriveled by grief, answered:

"It was—it was because he asked you, 'Are not your dear little feet cold?' No one ever said that to me! No one! No one!"

The Little Peach

By EUGENE FIELD

A LITTLE peach in the orchard grew,—
A little peach of emerald hue;
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew,
It grew.

One day, passing that orchard through,
That little peach dawned on the view
Of Johnny Jones and his sister Sue—
Them two.

Up at that peach a club they threw—
Down from the stem on which it grew
Fell that peach of emerald hue.
Mon Dieu!

John took a bite and Sue a chew,
And then the trouble began to brew,—
Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue.
Too true!

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew,—
Boo hoo!

What of that peach of the emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew?
Ah, well, its mission on earth is through.
Adieu!

Because of a Rose-Leaf

By ANTONIO FOGAZZARO

Antonio Fogazzaro

IT WAS nearly midnight when a carriage from the Royal Court drew up before the entrance to the Heribrand Palace. An officer of the guards sprang to the ground, passed into the palace, and reappeared ten minutes later, accompanied by a tall, spare gentleman, who entered the carriage in nervous haste. The inquisitive frequenters of the neighboring Oriental Café recognized in him Count Maurice Heribrand, retired general, former tutor, under the late king, of the heir-apparent, Minister of the Interior during the first year of the new reign, and since then quite withdrawn from affairs of state.

The news that he had been summoned to the court spread throughout the city even faster than the carriage could make its way back to the Royal Palace.

That evening all the beer-halls and cafés of the capital were filled with gossiping crowds, because during the afternoon a question of foreign policy had overthrown, by a majority of forty votes, the equivocal and unpopular Fersen ministry; and it was hoped that his majesty would intrust the formation of a new cabinet to the deputy Lemminck, leader of the opposition, a man of great ability, tried probity, and iron will. He had already been premier once, and was noted for his bold hostility to certain weaknesses of the king, towards whom the present minister, Fersen, had, despite his democratic leanings, always shown himself indulgent. It was known that General Heribrand, an ultra-conservative, was a personal enemy of Lemminck, who as premier had on one occasion treated him with scant courtesy. Consequently, Heribrand's summons to the court aroused dissatisfaction. And yet it was beyond question that he would oppose the retention of Fersen, and above all that he would combat the secret influence of the Princess Victoria of Malmöe-Ziethen, the favorite of the king.

This princess, a Frenchwoman by birth and separated from her husband, was resented by the public because she was a foreigner, because she meddled in affairs of state, and because her influence robbed them of a queen. The people would more easily have pardoned their king a succession of fugitive gallantries than this one absorbing passion which had now lasted three years. All this the king knew and contemptuously disregarded. He was a man who united a rare mentality with a kindly heart; he had no exalted conception of his own crown or sword; he was not stirred by ambitions; he was far more poet and artist than he was king; above all, he was a sensitive, fastidious spirit, to whom the ordinary cares of government were a burden, and for whom the sole pleasure of reigning lay in the artistic luxury that it placed within his reach and the rare intellects that he could gather around him. Furthermore, since he was convinced that the Princess Victoria loved him as a man and not as a king, it pleased him to possess, in his character of lover, the supreme and singular distinction of a throne. At the same time, he was equally sensitive and fastidious in his conception of his kingly duties; and here was a source of bitter conflicts and profound melancholy, because the nobility of his nature suffered from an inborn and mortal malady, a chronic weakness of will.

The outcome of this crisis, which had caused General Heribrand's summons to the court, was likely to decide the country's destiny. Count Fersen had been leading the government towards an alliance with the powerful nation of the princess Malmöe-Ziethen, and thence, under existing European conditions, towards war. A Lemminck cabinet would mean a reduction of the military budget and a modest foreign policy. Everyone knew that, immediately after the vote was taken, Fersen tendered the cabinet's resignation, thereby placing his majesty in the dilemma of having either to accept the resignation or to dissolve parliament.

His majesty had given no definite answer, but had conferred later with the presidents of the Upper and Lower Houses, who had agreed in recommending Lemminck as premier. It was further known that the Princess Victoria was lying ill in her villa on the island of Sihl. A great popular demonstration had greeted the appearance of the leader of the opposition, and the cry had been raised, "Down with the Frenchwoman!"

The carriage conveying Heribrand entered the court of the Royal Palace at midnight, just as a one-horse hired cab was coming out. The general was kept waiting some five minutes in the antechamber, before being admitted to the king's private cabinet. This cabinet, comparatively small for the height of its ceiling, is situated in the northeast angle of the palace, forming part of the tower. It has two immense balconies, the one commanding the open sea, the other facing the broad terraces that slope downward to the military gate. Between these balconies there is a chimney-piece of black marble, within which, on this particular evening, a fire was burning, notwithstanding that it was already the middle of April. An electric lamp, hanging high above, shed far more of its light upon the carved ebony and silver ornaments of the ceiling than upon the slender figure of the king, standing upright before the fire.

His majesty extended his hand to the old general, whose shrunken limbs, portentous leanness, and exaggerated cast of features made him resemble the ghost of Don Quixote.

"Dear general," said the king, in a voice which, while affectionate, yet trembled with emotion, "forgive me for disturbing you at such an hour. I have need of you."

Heribrand replied, somewhat coldly, that he always held himself subject to his majesty's commands.

"I am not in need of subjects," rejoined the king, growing frigid in his turn; "I have need of a friend. Are you offended with me?"

As the general started to protest, his majesty interrupted him, saying, "Come over here," seized his arm, forced him into one of the two big armchairs beside the balcony that faced the sea, seated himself in the other, and began a rapid review of the situation. He detailed his interviews with the premier and with the two presidents of the two houses; he owned that he felt himself face to face with what was probably the most serious responsibility of his whole life; that he was terrified at his own profound perplexity; that he looked to Heribrand to decide for him, to give him safe counsel, and that he had been unable to wait for it until the morrow.

The general listened impassively and answered, with curt directness, "Sire, you should send for Lemminck."

The king's face darkened, and after a moment he arose without speaking and moved away with slow steps, pausing before the chimney to gaze into the fire. The general also arose and, after a rapid glance around the room, stood motionless, with his gaze fixed upon his sovereign. In his eyes and on his lofty, royal brow there dwelt an unwonted expression of gravity and severity.

"You do not know all," said his majesty at last, still sunk in thought, and without looking at Heribrand. "You do not understand the present tendencies in Europe. You do not understand the obligations under which we are placed."

"Sire," rejoined the general swiftly, "if these obligations were incurred by the Fersen ministry, they are ended with its downfall; if they are obligations incurred by your majesty, I would respectfully inquire why you have done me the honor of asking my advice?"

A sudden disdain flashed across the king's face.

"I do not incur personal obligations!" he said excitedly. "I am faithful to the constitution. You ought not to misunderstand me, general. You ought to know that a government may enter into certain agreements that are not formal, not in writing, but that nevertheless cannot be quite so easily ignored."

The general replied that the vote of the House implied a disapproval of these agreements.

"Don't talk to me of the vote of the House!" exclaimed the king. "It is impossible for our foreign relations to be controlled by the House! You cannot drive unbroken horses along a dangerous road, from inside a closed carriage!"

"We cannot drive the horses, sire; but we can know whither we wish to be driven, and we can give the orders to the coachman. The country does not wish to be driven into war."

The king made no answer.

"I am absolutely unable," resumed

Heribrand, "to give advice in accordance with your majesty's wishes."

"My majesty's wishes!" exclaimed the king contemptuously, "my majesty's wishes! Look out there, at that steamer with the red lights, speeding along in the moonlight. On board that steamer is a lad on his way to Rome, to study art, with money I have given him. I wish I were that lad! That is what my majesty wishes! Excuse me, general, but you know how deep a regard I have always had for you; you are the first person to whom I turn after hearing my official counselors, the first person from whom I ask advice, and yet you can speak to me like this!"

The general hesitated an instant and then answered in a tone that was deferential and yet firm:

"No, sire, I am not the first."

The king started and fixed his eyes keenly upon the face of Heribrand, who sustained the glance without lowering his own.

"Just what do you happen to know?" he asked haughtily. The general spread out his arms and bowed his head, as if to say: I am sorry, but it is of no use; I do know.

"Do you think," resumed his majesty, in a voice shaken with emotion, "do you think that you have the right?" He did not complete the phrase, but kept his angry eyes still fixed upon the general. "No one else has ever dared!" he added.

"Sire," answered Heribrand, raising his head again, "My conscience is not at the disposition of your majesty, even though my rank and my decorations are."

"That is pure melodrama," exclaimed the king. "It is no answer to make to me, since I have a conscience, as well as you!"

The general, turning deadly pale, begged that the king would punish, rather than insult, an old and faithful servitor, and requested leave to withdraw. The king, with a violent gesture, refused.

"No," he said, "I wish to be more generous than you, and to prove to you that a certain other person is above your insinuations, above your suspicions, above all the baseness of which this world is full!"

So speaking, he unbuttoned his coat in impetuous haste. The general reached out his hand, as if to check him; whereupon the king, in a sudden impulse, extended his own to Heribrand.

"See here," he said, with a rapid change from anger to affection, "don't irritate me; forget for a while that I am the king, treat me like an equal, open your heart to me, as I am ready to open my heart to you! Open your heart, and let me hear a word of real warmth! Tell me all your suspicions, all your fears,—but with the understanding that you speak to me as a friend! Supposing that I am in love, is that any reason for meriting your contempt? And take my word for it, I beg you,—you have deceived yourself; you do not know her; and I want you to know her, I want you to meet her! Of course, she has written to me, of course she has given me advice. How could she help it? A woman who loves me with her whole soul, unable to come to me, and yet send no word, on such a day as this? Why, general, my old teacher! are you not a man? Were you never young?"

He stretched out his arms to the general, who, deeply moved although not convinced, clasped his former pupil to him.

The king was the first to recover himself, and drawing from his inside pocket a letter-case, and from the letter-case a letter handed it to Heribrand.

"Read," he said.

Heribrand took the letter; but in order to read it he needed his glasses; and being unable, in his agitation, to find them, he showed such impatience as caused the king to smile, and in the end brought them both to a calmer frame of mind. At last the glasses were found, and the general was able to read the letter of the Princess of Malmöe-Ziethen.

SIHL, VILLA VICTORIA, *April* 11.

SIRE:—

My uncle, de Ziethen, has just brought me the news from the capital. The vote is to be taken this very day, and the opposition will triumph. There will be a popular clamor to bring M. Lemminck into power; but the *Frenchwoman*, as they call me in the street, the *Foreigner*, as they call me at court, will not allow it. And the result will be, not the dismissal of M. Fersen, but the dissolution of parliament.

Good God, how clearly I have foreseen all this!

My very heart is torn because of it. Not on my own account, for I have too profound a contempt for these great artists in mischief-making, ever to be suspected of quailing before them. It is on your account, sire. I care little for the folly of the people, or the perfidy of a few scoundrels. My fears center in your own heart, the sum of all that is precious to me in the world, this great love in which it is such joy to merge our souls, our honour, and our lives.

M. Lemminck hates me. He is a terrible man, so it seems. He comes forward, supported by a clamorous crowd; he will not be tender of your feelings; he will work to separate me from you.

Ah, but, sire, a majority of the House is pledged to him; and if it is not glory, if it is not greatness, it is at least prosperity and security that he brings! This must be your choice, sire, this must be your choice,—to secure the happiness of your people. My own happiness will lie in having aided you. That is a task worthy of a queen, and it is the only kind of crown you have to offer me. I ask it of you, my friend, with a smile upon my lips.

VICTORIA.

The general read the written page again and again; then, holding it between two fingers, he arose with a long-drawn sigh, a long and dubious "eh?" and let it fall upon the writing desk.

"Well?" questioned the king.

"Ah, sire," returned Heribrand, "had my own son shown me a letter like that, I should say to him, 'Do not trust it, it is false throughout, even to these marks of tears between the last word and the signature! Do you not feel,' I should say to him, 'the artifice in the style and in the closing lines? Do you not feel that, down to the very tears, it is all done for effect?' Your majesty," he continued hastily, in response to a gesture of violent interruption from the king, "this is what I should say to my own son! To your majesty, on the contrary, I may say,—and perhaps, who knows? I may come nearer to the truth,—'This woman is not sincere, but she believes herself to be; she believes in her own phrases, she intoxicates herself with the vain imagining of a sacrifice which your majesty does not mean to permit her to accomplish; she is moved to pity for herself, and these drops that fell so near to the *smile upon the lips* are really and truly tears.

"Your majesty asked me if I was ever young. I supposed you knew that I had been far too young for my own good. Well, of the many women for whom I have felt a greater or lesser love, one only knew that she was playing a comedy, and two alone were really not playing comedy. All the others were acting a part, without being aware of it,—precisely as the princess is doing now. Besides, sire, if you believe her, why not take her advice? Why not give her this crown which she requests? If the princess is sincere, she is heroic, and few queens have done so much for a king and for a people! Your majesty has a noble spirit, and will find happiness in having been loved by another noble spirit that not only conceived a sacrifice but accomplished it. Courage, sire! Perhaps it would have been better if I had not said all those other bitter things.

"Your majesty asked me to open my heart and I have opened it. I will own myself mistaken, I will even believe everything blindly, I will have nothing but admiration for the princess,—but only on condition that what she requests be done! They are not playing for small stakes in this game. Fersen is risking the whole country at *rouge et noir:* if *rouge* comes up, it will be little more than a sterile glory, and dearly bought; if *noir* comes up, it will be an immense disaster. Sire, if I had to speak to my son, all over again, I should say, 'Your duty is not to permit this game to be played!'"

"I thank you," said the king. "You have said some things that I feel to be unjust, cruelly unjust; but you have been loyal, and this time you have spoken from your heart. I thank you. Yet, for the matter of that, I do not think that you have been just, even towards the premier."

And hereupon, he digressed upon the possible results of a successful war, spoke of a great political union that might be effected around his throne, of an Empire of the North that had already been the object of secret treaties with France. It was evident that his heated words mirrored back the ideas of others, the ambitions of a minister and a woman, as well as those of the prospective emperor.

"Sire," said Heribrand, after having followed him with respectful attention, "if I were not afraid of offending your majesty, I would risk one further liberty."

"And what is that?"

"I would say that this was not the latest communication that you had received from the princess."

The king flushed and showed a slight embarrassment.

"You must have met a carriage as you came here," he observed. "That is why you now——"

"No, sire," responded Heribrand, "that is not why." His eyes were resting at a certain point upon the writing desk. The king glanced suddenly towards the same spot at which the general was looking, and, seeing nothing, betrayed himself.

"You needed only that silken string!" he said, flushing deeper than before.

"I needed even less than that," answered the general, with a smile. "The silken string is no longer here, any more than the flower is here."

The king crossed over to the desk and perceived two scraps of moss and a faint stain of moisture on the leather surface.

"I have not hidden it!" he rejoined excitedly. "You might easily have seen it as you entered."

In fact, not actually in the doorway, but just within, the general, in one sweeping glance around the room, discovered on a little shelf beside a cabinet an alabaster tear-vase from Volterra, in which reposed the mysterious flower.

"Here it is," said the king, crossing over to take down the little antique vase.

It was an opulent, magnificent rose, its outer and paler leaves drooping with a suggestion of languor, while the deep heart of it was yet barely opening, with a sensuous air of invitation.

"I recognize it," said Heribrand, inhaling the flower's perfume. "I also love roses. It is a *La France*, a magnificent one! It were wiser to form an alliance with this France than with the other! The other has too many thorns!"

Once more he smelled the flower, then drew nearer to the king and for a full quarter hour talked with him, urging the inopportuneness of the French alliance, in clear. vehement, convincing words.

"Supposing my choice should fall on you, general?" said the king, conscious that he was yielding, and clinging to Heribrand to save himself from falling back upon Lemminck, whose rough methods he found intolerable.

"No, sire," answered the aged statesman. "I am too unpopular, too deeply attached to the old-fashioned ways. And besides, I should have no more indulgence than Lemminck for the language of flowers. You must send for him."

"I swear to you that I did not know the name of that rose!" exclaimed the king impetuously. "Are you sure that it is a *La France?* Are you quite sure?" And he began to pace the floor, with bowed head, from door to chimney, repeating every now and again, mechanically, "Are you quite sure?" while the general continued to protest that he really was quite sure. At last the king paused in front of Heribrand and gave him his hand, saying:

"I think that tomorrow you will be satisfied with me. And in that case, I hope that you will also be satisfied with the princess, will you not?"

"I shall reverence her, sire," responded Heribrand, as he took his leave.

On the threshold he remembered his glasses, which he had left upon the writing-desk. He turned back, and in his haste to pick them up, accidentally brushed his sleeve against the little antique vase, which was overturned, letting the rose fall to the ground. With an exclamation of dismay, the general stooped to recover it; and fumbling on the floor, instead of taking hold of the stem, he grasped the flower itself. He restored it to its place, practically unharmed. A single petal, one of those most widely opened, hung crumpled and almost torn away.

His majesty saw all this, without moving or uttering a word. His poetic sense of perfection, his feminine sensitiveness always suffered incredibly from any clumsiness, any slight impropriety of another. It would have destroyed his admiration for a man of genius to see him flick the ashes of a cigarette upon the carpet; and the most charming woman would have lost a large share of her attraction if, while talking with him, she had chanced to let fall a drop of tea upon her gown. After Heribrand was gone, the king's face flushed with annoyance. The sight of that crumpled petal, that rose so rudely handled, distressed him. Taking the flower, he drew forth the unopened centre within it, and threw the rest upon the glowing coals in the fireplace.

Then, as he recalled the discussion that had just ended, his annoyance seemed to blend with his memory of the general's face and voice, rendering more displeasing each word of severity, and less pleasing each word of affection; so much so that, as he heard the rose crackling upon the coals and caught the slight resinous fragrance it diffused into the air, and saw the last sparks gleaming in its blackened leaves, he very naturally thought again of the clumsy accident, and the suspicion came that it might have been done on purpose. He drove it away at once; it was too base a suspicion. Yet there still remained a disagreeable impression that the general's carelessness had been offensive. And at the same time an ardent longing arose in his heart: Oh, if she had only come in person, instead of sending a rose! If only she would come in now; if he might have her there, at least until tomorrow, instead of wearying his brain with politics!

He pressed a folded paper to his lips, the note which had come with the flower,—to his lips, to his heart, to his brow, as if to fill his mind with the luminous rays of love,—then again to his lips, and more ardently than before. The subtle perfume of the paper, the faint odor of lily-of-the-valley so dear to the princess, set his heart throbbing with emotion, and seemed to cloud his brain. He drew a long, deep sigh, as if gasping for air and life; then read the note once again:

"It has come, then! Be brave, sire, and do your duty,—it is your love and mine that begs this of you. I suffer, my friend, for I love you beyond reason, and I long to come and throw myself into your arms. But I shall not come, because I should never know how to tear myself from them again! I am sending you a rose for the alabaster vase,—you know, the charming little tear-vase, that is so appropriate to it. For many a tear has fallen on it; yes, and many kisses too! Yet it is a happy rose, to be able to be with you all the night, and to die tomorrow.

"Farewell, sire. If your choice has been made, let me know it speedily. Do not put out your lamp tonight; then I shall understand that M. Lemminck is to be premier. From my chamber I can see your lamp, with the aid of an opera-glass. It is my star, and never before will it have shone so pure and so high!

"VICTORIA."

The perfume of lily-of-the-valley had brought before the king's excited fancy the physical loveliness of the princess; and those hastily written words, in long impetuous strokes, all slanting as if bent over by a gust of passion, brought before him her very soul. Intoxicated with her, he could still feel his conscience weakly asking if it were not wrong to let himself be so transported, to let the whirlwind of desire sweep away all calm and all strength, at a time when he had most need of them. He answered that it was sweet to lose himself after this fashion; that perhaps love would be his best inspiration; and by an effort of will he imposed silence upon that feeble yet troublesome voice.

And now it was upon her portrait that he sought to concentrate his attention: upon those eyes, full of tenderness and pride, that looked back at him from the familiar face, more patrician and delicate than beautiful, framed in the capricious disorder of a black veil. Then, feeling himself on fire, he opened the door upon the balcony that faced the sea, and passed out into the cutting wind, amid the dull, measured roar of waves breaking on the rocks below. The moon was hidden by a bank of clouds; yet the island of Sihl could be seen very clearly, showing black in the near distance. The cold wind somewhat restored the king to himself; but the darkness, with its satanic power of obscuring man's sense of consequences and magnifying the desires of love, conspired with the island of Sihl. In this place and at this hour, political combinations counted for nothing with the king, and love for everything. Five minutes later, he reëntered his cabinet and for the sake of being honest with himself, found justification for what he was about to do, by rapidly skimming over in his mind the few unconvincing arguments that lay on his side: the premier's promises, and the Empire of the North. Then, pressing a finger on the electric button, without wishing to think further, he put out the light.

It was fifty minutes after midnight. The waiting-maid of the Princess of Malmöe-Ziethen suddenly notified her mistress that the window of his majesty's cabinet no longer showed a light. The princess sprang from her bed, seized the glasses that the maid handed her, and flung open the sash. The royal apartment at present showed lights in only eleven windows out of the usual twelve. The twelfth window, the one in the corner tower, was dark. Victoria flung her arms around the maid, took one more look through the glasses, tossed them from her, and went back to bed, trembling with delight; and while the other in a daze of wonder closed the window, asked if she would be frightened at the idea of a great war close at hand.

Twelve hours later, the *Official Gazette* published the decree of the dissolution of parliament, countersigned by the Count of Fersen.

* * *

"It's true," he said; and his own gravity then touched him to join a duet with her, which made them no longer feel strangers, and did the work of a month of intimacy. Better than sentiment, laughter opens the breast to love; opens the whole breast to his full quiver, instead of a corner here and there for a solitary arrow. Hail the occasion propitious, O . . . young! and laugh and treat love as an honest God, and dabble not with the sentimental rouge.

These two laughed, and the souls of each cried out to other, "It is I, it is I."

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Some Love-Letters of Famous Men and Women of the 18th and 19th Centuries

PROSPER MERIMEE TO JENNY DAQUIN

Contrary to my usual habit, I have no distinct recollection of that day, but am like a cat who licks his whiskers for a long time after drinking his milk. Admit that the peace of which you sometimes speak with admiration, that the *Kêf*, which is superior even to the best that we know, is as nothing in comparison to the happiness "which is almost pain." Nothing is more insignificant than the life of an oyster, especially of an oyster which is not eaten. . . .

Good-bye. Do not have any second thoughts, and give me a place in your first.

KWEI-LI TO HER HUSBAND (A CHINESE OFFICIAL)

Dost thou know what love is? Thou canst not till thou holdest Love itself within thy very arms. I thought I loved thee. I smile now at the remembrance of that feeble flickering that was as like unto the real love as the faint, cold beam of the candle is to the rays of the glorious sun. Now—now—thou art the father of my son. Thou hast a new place in my heart. The tie that binds our hearts together is stronger than a rope of twisted bamboo; it is a bond, a love bond, that never can be severed. I am the mother of thy first-born—thou hast given me my man-child. Love thee—love thee!—now I *know!*

I am Thine Own.

RICHARD STEELE TO MARY SCURLOCK

Madam,

It is the hardest thing in the world to be in love and yet attend to business. As for me, all who speak to me find me out, and I must lock myself up or other people will do it for me.

A gentleman asked me this morning, "What news from Lisbon?" and I answered, "She is exquisitely handsome." Another desired to know when I had been last at Hampton Court. I replied, "It will be on Tuesday come se'nnight." Prythee, allow me at least to kiss your hand before that day, that my mind may be in some composure. O love!

"A thousand torments dwell about me!
Yet who would live to live without thee?"

Methinks I could write a volume to you; but all the language on earth would fail in saying how much and with what disinterested passion I am ever yours, RICH. STEELE.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO MADAME HELVETIUS

. . . Passy.

Chagrined at your resolution, pronounced so decidedly last evening, to remain single for life, in honour of your dear husband, I went home, fell upon my bed, thought myself dead, and found myself in the Elysian Fields.

They asked me if I had any desire to see any persons in particular. "Lead me to the philosophers." "There are two that reside here in this garden. They are very good neighbours and very friendly to each other." "Who are they?" "Socrates and Helvetius." "I esteem them both prodigiously; but let me see Helvetius first, because I understand a little French and not a word of Greek." He viewed me with much courtesy, having known me, he said, by reputation for some time. He asked me a thousand things about the war, and the present state of religion, liberty and government in France. "You ask me nothing, then, respecting your friend Madame Helvetius, and yet she loves you still excessively; it is but an hour since I was at her house." "Ah!" said he, "you make me recollect my former felicity; but I ought to forget it to be happy here. For many years I thought of nothing but her. At last I am consoled. I have taken another wife, the most like her that I could find. She is not, it is true, quite so handsome; but she has as much good sense and wit, and loves me infinitely. Her continued study is to please me; she is at present gone to look for the best nectar and ambrosia to regale me this evening; stay with me and you will see her."

"I perceive," said I, "that your old friend is more faithful than you; for many good matches have been offered her, all of which she has refused. I confess to you that I loved her myself to excess; but she was severe to me, and has absolutely refused me, for love of you." "I commiserate you," said he, "for your misfortune; for indeed she is a good woman, and very amiable. But the Abbé de la Roche and the Abbé Morellet, are they not still sometimes at her house?" "Yes, indeed, for she has not lost a single one of your friends." "If you had gained over the Abbé Morellet with coffee and cream to speak for you, perhaps you would have succeeded, for he is as subtle a reasoner as Scotus or St. Thomas, and puts his arguments in such good order that they become almost irresistible: or if you had secured the Abbé de la Roche, by giving him some fine edition of an old classic, to speak *against* you, that would have been better; for I have always observed that when he advises anything, she has a very strong inclination to do the reverse."

At these words the new Madame Helvetius entered with the nectar; I instantly recognized her as Mrs. Franklin, my old American friend. I reclaimed her, but she said to me coldly, "I have been your good wife forty-nine years and four months; almost half a century; be content with that." Dissatisfied with this refusal of my Eurydice I immediately resolved to quit those ungrateful shades and to return to this good world to see again the sun and you. Here I am. *Let us avenge ourselves.*

POPE TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

After having dreamed of you several nights, besides a hundred reveries by day, I find it necessary to relieve myself by writing; though this is the fourth letter I have sent.

For God's sake, madam, let not my correspondence be like the traffic with the grave from whence there is no return. Unless you write to me, my wishes must be like a poor papist's devotions to separate spirits, who, for all they know or hear from them, either may or may not be sensible of their addresses.

None but your guardian angels can have you more constantly in mind than I; and if they have, it is only because they can see you always. If ever you think of those fine young beaux of Heaven, I beg you to reflect that you have just as much consolation from them as I have at present from you. . . .

BENJAMIN CONSTANT TO MADAME RÉCAMIER

September 3rd, 1814.

To-morrow evening, to-morrow evening? What is that evening to me? It will commence for me at five o'clock in the morning. To-morrow is to-day. Thanks to God, yesterday is passed. I shall therefore be at your door at nine o'clock. They will tell me that you are not there. I shall be there between ten and eleven, will they still tell me that you are not there?

. . . I seem mad to you perhaps; but I see your look, I repeat to myself your words. . . . I am right to be mad. I would be mad not to be so. Till this evening, then. *Mon dieu!* If you are not the most indifferent of women, how much you will make me suffer in my life! . . . Once again, till to-night.

GEORGE SAND TO ALFRED DE MUSSET

April 15-17th, 1834.

. . . Do not believe, do not believe, Alfred, that I could be happy with the thought of having lost your heart. That I have been your mistress or your mother, what does it matter? That I have inspired you with love or with friendship—that I have been happy or unhappy with you, all that changes nothing in the state of my mind, at present. I know that I love you and that is all. To watch over you, to preserve you from all ill, from all contrariety, to surround you with distractions and pleasures, that is the need and the regret which I feel since I have lost you. Why has so sweet a task and one which I should have performed with such joy become, little by little, so bitter, and then, all at once, impossible? How is it that I, who would have offered up all my blood to give you a night's rest and peace, have become for you a torment, a scourge, a spectre? When these atrocious memories besiege me (and at what hour do they leave me in peace?), I almost go mad.

BALZAC TO COUNTESS HANSKA

Dresden, October 21st, 1843.

If happiness for a woman is to know herself unique in a heart, alone, filling it in an indispensable manner, sure to shine in the intelligence of a man as his light, sure to be his blood, to animate each heart-beat, to live in his thought as the substance itself of that thought, and having the certainty that it would be always and always so; *eh bien*, dear sovereign of my soul, you can call yourself happy, and happy *senza brama*, for so I shall be for you till death. One can feel satiety for human things, there is none for divine things, and this word alone can explain what you are for me.

THOMAS CARLYLE TO JANE WELCH

My darling: *Scotsbrig, 12 Aug., 1826.*

O my good Jane, it is an awful and delicious thought, this of wedlock! Need is, most pressing need, that the heart you give your own heart to, be well and seriously judged and found worthy. With one whose integrity of soul you even doubted, it were better to die a thousand deaths than to wed.

I swear it will break my heart if I make thee unhappy. And yet I am a perverse mortal to deal with, and the best resolutions make shipwreck in the sea of practice. But thou must be a *very* good wife, and I will be a very good husband.

JANE WELCH TO THOMAS CARLYLE

. . . Oh, my dearest friend, be always so good to me, and I shall make the best and happiest wife! When I read in your looks and words that you love me, then I care not one straw for the whole universe besides. But when you fly from me to smoke tobacco, or speak of me as a mere circumstance of your lot, then, indeed, my heart is troubled about many things.

JOHN KEATS TO FANNY BRAWNE

. . . My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again—my Life seems to stop there—I see no farther. . . . I have been astonished that Men could die Martyrs for religion—I have shuddered at it. I shudder no more—I could be martyred for my Religion—Love is my religion—I could die for that. I could die for you. My Creed is Love and you are its only tenet. You have ravished me away by a Power I cannot resist; and yet I could resist till I saw you; and even since I have seen you I have endeavoured often to reason against the reasons for my love. I can do that no more—the pain would be too great. My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you.

Prince Bismarck to Johanna von Puttkamer

My Heart, *Schonhausen, February 7, '47.*

. . . If I could only dream of you when you do of me! But recently I do not dream at all—shockingly healthy and prosaic; or does my soul fly to Reinfeld in the night and associate with yours? In that case it can certainly not dream here; but it ought to tell about its journey in the morning, whereas the wayward thing is as silent about its nocturnal employments as though it, too, slept like a badger. . . . I love you, *c'est tout dire.*

Bismarck.

Daniel Webster to Josephine Seaton

My dear Josephine: *Monday Morning, March 4th, '44.*

I fear you got a wetting last evening, as it rained fast soon after you left our door; and I avail myself on the return of your *Bonnet*, to express the wish that you are well this morning, and without cold.

I have demanded parlance with your Bonnet: have asked it how many tender looks it has noticed to be directed under it; what soft words it has heard, close to its side; in what instances an air of triumph has caused it to be tossed; and whether, ever, and when, it has quivered from trembling emotions, proceeding from below. But it has proved itself a faithful keeper of secrets, and would answer none of my questions. It only remained for me to attempt to surprise it into confession, by pronouncing sundry names, one after another. It seemed quite unmoved by most of these, but at the apparently unexpected mention of one, I thought its ribbons decidedly fluttered!

I gave it my parting good wishes; hoping that it might never cover an aching head, and that the eyes which it protects from the rays of the sun, may know no tears but those of joy and affection.

Yours, dear Josephine, with affectionate regard. Danl. Webster.

Nathaniel Hawthorne to His Wife

I am sometimes driven to wish that you and I could mount upon a cloud (as we used to fancy in those heavenly walks of ours), and be borne quite out of sight and hearing of the world; for now all the people in the world seem to come between us. How happy were Adam and Eve! There was no third person to come between them, and all the infinity around them only seemed to press their hearts closer together. We love one another as well as they; but there is no silent and lovely garden of Eden for us. Will you sail away with me to discover some summer island? Do you not think that God has reserved one for us, ever since the beginning of the world? Foolish that I am to raise a question of it, since we *have* found such an Eden—such an island sacred to us two—whenever we have been together. Then we are the Adam and Eve of a virgin earth.

Leon Gambetta to Leonie Leon

Friday evening, May 23rd, 1879,
written at the distance of a kiss.

Dear little adored woman,—Hast thou ever penetrated to the bottom of my soul like to-day? . . . I am quite sure that I have to-day possessed the full and entire essence of your nature. I have lived in your life and not in mine. I would lose with pleasure the sentiment of my personality to pass into yours. The dream is accomplished, the revelation is complete, I respire in the azure which you inhabit, and it is fitting to say again with the prophet-king, I feel as if I were a god, and I am that, because the property, the gift of the divinity, is Love. It is in you that I lose myself for all eternity, and I have no further desires beyond this, beyond this inaffable communion. To thee, then, in thee and for thee.

Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck

January 1, 1859.

Ah, I still breathe it, the magic fragrance of those blooms thou pluck'dst me from thy heart! They were not buds of life; so smell the wonder blooms of heavenly death, of life eternal; so decked they of yore the hero's corse, ere it was burnt to godlike ashes. Into that grave of flames and perfumes leaped his loved one, to mingle her beloved's ashes with her own—and they were one! One element, not two loving mortals; one divine substance of eternity.

Thy caresses, they are the crown of my life, the sweet roses that blossomed from the wreath of thorns wherewith alone my head was clad. Now am I proud and happy! Not a wish, not a longing! Delight, supreme consciousness, strength and aptitude for everything, for every storm of life!

Nay! nay, repent them not! Repent them? Never!

SARAH BERNHARDT TO VICTORIEN SARDOU

Wonderful Boy,

Where art thou to-night? The letter came but an hour ago—a cruel hour—I had hoped that thou wouldst pass it here with me.

Paris now without thee is but a morgue: before I knew *thee* it was Paris, and I thought it heaven; but now it is a wide desert of desolation and loneliness. It is like the face of a clock when the hands have been taken away.

All the pictures that hung in my memory before I knew thee have gone and given their places to the radiant moments that we have spent together.

I cannot live now away from thee—thy words, even though they were bitter words—would give chase to all the world's uneasiness and make me glad; my art has been nourished by them and softly rocked in their tender cradle until they are as requisite to me now as are the sunlight and air.

I am hungry for them as I would be for food. I am thirsty for them, and my thirst is surpassing. *Thy words are my food, thy breath my wine, Thou art all to me!* . . .

THY SARAH.

Clear River

From the Annamese by

E. POWYS MATHERS

CLEAR RIVER twists nine times about
Clear River; but so deep
That none can see the green sand.
You hear the birds about Clear River
Dik, dik, dik, dik, Diu dik.

A little woman with jade eyes
Leans on the wall of a pavilion.
She has the moonrise in her heart,
And the singing of love songs
Comes to her up the river.

She stands and dreams for me
Outside the house by the bamboo door.
In a minute
I will leave my shadow
And talk to her of poetry and love.

King Solomon of Kentucky

By JAMES LANE ALLEN

James Lane Allen

I

IT HAD been a year of strange disturbances — a desolating drought, a hurly-burly of destructive tempests, killing frosts in the tender valleys, mortal fevers in the tender homes. Now came tidings that all day the wail of myriads of locusts was heard in the green woods of Virginia and Tennessee; now that Lake Erie was blocked with ice on the very verge of summer, so that in the Niagara new rocks and islands showed their startling faces. In the Blue-grass Region of Kentucky countless caterpillars were crawling over the ripening apple orchards and leaving the trees as stark as when tossed in the thin air of bitter February days.

Then, flying low and heavily through drought and tempest and frost and plague, like the royal presence of disaster, that had been but heralded by its mournful train, came nearer and nearer the dark angel of the pestilence.

M. Xaupi had given a great ball only the night before in the dancing-rooms over the confectionery of M. Giron—that M. Giron who made the tall pyramids of méringues and macaroons for wedding suppers, and spun around them a cloud of candied webbing as white and misty as the veil of the bride. It was the opening cotillon party of the summer. The men came in blue cloth coats with brass buttons, buff waistcoats, and laced and ruffled shirts; the ladies came in white satins with ethereal silk overdresses, embroidered in the figure of a gold beetle or an oak leaf of green. The walls of the ballroom were painted to represent landscapes of blooming orange-trees, set here and there in clustering tubs; and the chandeliers and sconces were lighted with innumerable wax-candles, yellow and green and rose.

Only the day before, also, Clatterbuck had opened for the summer a new villa-house, six miles out in the country, with a dancing-pavilion in a grove of maples and oaks, a pleasure-boat on a sheet of crystal water, and a cellar stocked with old sherry, Sauterne, and Château Margaux wines, with anisette, "Perfect Love," and Guigholet cordials.

Down on Water Street, near where now stands a railway station, Hugh Lonney, urging that the fear of cholera was not the only incentive to cleanliness, had just fitted up a sumptuous bath-house, where cold and shower baths might be had at twelve and a half cents each, or hot ones at three for half a dollar.

Yes, the summer of 1833 was at hand, and there must be new pleasures, new luxuries; for Lexington was the Athens of the West and the Kentucky Birmingham.

Old Peter Leuba felt the truth of this, as he stepped smiling out of his little music-store on Main Street, and, rubbing his hands briskly together, surveyed once more his newly-arranged windows, in which were displayed gold and silver epaulets, bottles of Jamaica rum, garden seeds from Philadelphia, drums and guitars and harps. Dewees & Grant felt it in their drug-store on Cheapside, as they sent off a large order for calomel and superior Maccoboy, rappee, and Lancaster snuff. Bluff little Daukins Tegway felt it, as he hurried on the morning of that day to the office of the *Observer and Reporter*, and advertised that he would willingly exchange his beautiful assortment of painted muslins and Dunstable bonnets for flax and feathers. On the threshold he met a florid farmer, who had just offered ten dollars' reward for a likely runaway boy with a long fresh scar across his face; and to-morrow the paper would contain one more of those tragical little cuts, representing an African slave scampering away at the top of his speed, with a stick swung across his shoulder and a bundle dangling down his back. In front of Postlethwaite's Tavern, where now stands the Phœnix Hotel, a company of idlers, leaning back in Windsor chairs and planting their feet against the opposite wall on a level with their heads, smoked and chewed and yawned, as they discussed the administration of Jackson and arranged for the coming of Daniel Webster in June, when they would give him a great barbecue, and roast in his honour a buffalo bull taken from the herd emparked near Ashland. They hailed a passing merchant, who, however, would hear nothing of the bull, but fell to praising his Rocky Mountain beaver and Goose Creek salt; and another, who turned a dead ear to Daniel Webster, and invited them to drop in and examine his choice essences of peppermint, bergamot, and lavender.

But of all the scenes that might have been observed in Lexington on that day, the most remarkable occurred in front of the old court-house at the hour of high noon. On the mellow stroke of the clock in the steeple above the sheriff stepped briskly forth, closely followed by a man of powerful frame, whom he commanded to station himself on the pavement several feet off. A crowd of men and boys had already collected in anticipation, and others came quickly up as the clear voice of the sheriff was heard across the open public square and old market-place.

He stood on the topmost of the court-house steps, and for a moment looked down on the crowd with the usual air of official severity.

"Gentlemen," he then cried out sharply, "by an ordah of the cou't I now offah this man at public sale to the highes' biddah. He is able-bodied but lazy, without visible property or means of suppoht, an' of dissolute habits. He is therefoh adjudged guilty of high misdemeanahs, an' is to be sole into labah foh a twelve-month. How much, then, am I offahed foh the vagrant? How much am I offahed foh ole King Sol'mon?"

Nothing was offered for old King Solomon. The spectators formed themselves into a ring around the big vagrant and settled down to enjoy the performance.

"Staht 'im, somebody."

Somebody started a laugh, which rippled around the circle.

The sheriff looked on with an expression of unrelaxed severity, but catching the eye of an acquaintance on the outskirts, he exchanged a lightning wink of secret appreciation. Then he lifted off his tight beaver hat, wiped out of his eyes a little shower of perspiration which rolled suddenly down from above, and warmed a degree to his theme.

"Come, gentlemen," he said, more suasively, "it's too hot to stan' heah all day. Make me an offah! You all know ole King Sol'mon; don't wait to be interduced. How much, then, to staht 'im? Say fifty dollahs! Twenty-five! Fifteen! Ten! Why, gentlemen! Not *ten* dollahs? Remembah this is the Blue-grass Region of Kentucky—the land of Boone an' Kenton, the home of Henry Clay!" he added, in an oratorical *crescendo*.

"He ain't wuth his victuals," said an oily little tavern-keeper, folding his arms restfully over his own stomach and cocking up one piggish eye into his neighbour's face. "He ain't wuth his 'taters."

"Buy 'im foh 'is rags!" cried a young law-student, with a Blackstone under his arm, to the town rag-picker opposite, who was unconsciously ogling the vagrant's apparel.

"I *might* buy 'im foh 'is *scalp*," drawled a farmer, who had taken part in all kinds of scalp contests and was now known to be busily engaged in collecting crow scalps for a match soon to come off between two rival counties.

"I think I'll buy 'im foh a hat-sign," said a manufacturer of ten-dollar Castor and Rhorum hats. This sally drew merry attention to the vagrant's hat, and the merchant felt rewarded.

"You'd bettah say the town ought to buy 'im an' put 'im up on top of the cou't-house as a scarecrow foh the cholera," said some one else.

"What news of the cholera did the stage-coach bring this mohning?" quickly inquired his neighbour in his ear; and the two immediately fell into low, grave talk, forgot the auction, and turned away.

"Stop, gentlemen, stop!" cried the sheriff, who had watched the rising tide of good-humour, and now saw his chance to float in on it with spreading sails. "You're runnin' the price in the wrong direction—down, not up. The law requires that he be sole to the highes' biddah, not the lowes'. As loyal citizens, uphole the constitution of the commonwealth of Kentucky an' make me an offah; the man is really a great bargain. In the first place, he would cos' his ownah little or nothin', because, as you see, he keeps himself in cigahs an' clo'es; then, his main article of diet is whisky—a supply of which he always has on han'. He don't even need a bed, foh you know he sleeps jus' as well on any dooh-step; noh a chair, foh he prefers to sit roun' on the curbstones. Remembah, too, gentlemen, that ole King Sol'mon is a Virginian—from the same neighbouhhood as Mr. Clay. Remembah that he is well educated, that he is an *awful* Whig, an' that he has smoked mo' of the stumps of Mr. Clay's cigahs than any other man in existence. If you don't b'lieve *me*, gentlemen, yondah goes Mr. Clay now; call *him* ovah an' ask 'im foh yo'se'ves."

He paused, and pointed with his right forefinger towards Main Street, along which the spectators, with a sudden craning of necks, beheld the familiar figure of the passing statesman.

"But you don't need *any*body to tell you these fac's, gentlemen," he continued. "You merely need to be reminded that ole King Sol'mon is no ohdinary man. Mo'ovah he has a kine heaht, he nevah spoke a rough wohd to anybody in this worl', an' he is as proud as Tecumseh of his good name an' charactah. An', gentlemen," he added, bridling with an air of mock gallantry and laying a hand on his heart, "if anythin' fu'thah is required in the way of a puffect encomium, we all know that there isn't anothah man among us who cuts as wide a swath among the ladies. The'foh, if you have any appreciation of virtue, any magnanimity of heaht; if you set a propah valuation upon the descendants of Virginia, that mothah of Presidents; if you believe in the pure laws of Kentucky as the pioneer bride of the Union; if you love America an' love the worl'—make me a gen'rous, high-toned offah foh ole King Sol'mon!"

He ended his peroration amid a shout of laughter and applause, and, feeling satisfied that it was a good time for returning to a more practical treatment of his subject, proceeded in a sincere tone:

"He can easily earn from one to two dollahs a day, an' from three to six hundred a yeah. There's not anothah white man in town capable of doin' as much work. There's not a niggah han' in the hemp factories with such muscles an' such a chest. *Look* at 'em! An', if you don't b'lieve me, step fo'wahd and *feel* 'em. How much, then, is bid foh 'im?"

"One dollah!" said the owner of a hemp factory, who had walked forward and felt the vagrant's arm, laughing, but colouring up also as the eyes of all were quickly turned upon him. In those days it was not an unheard-of thing for the muscles of a human being to be thus examined when being sold into servitude to a new master.

"Thank you!" cried the sheriff, cheerily. "One precinc' heard from! One dollah! I am offahed one dollah foh ole King Sol'mon. One dollah foh the king! Make it a half. One dollah an' a half. Make it a half. One dol-dol-dol-dollah!"

Two medical students, returning from lectures at the old Medical Hall, now joined the group, and the sheriff explained:

"One dollah is bid foh the vagrant ole King Sol'mon, who is to be sole into labah foh a twelvemonth. Is there any othah bid? Are you all done? One dollah, once——"

"Dollah and ahalf," said one of the students, and remarked half jestingly under his breath to his companion, "I'll buy him on the chance of his dying. We'll dissect him."

"Would you own his body if he *should* die?"

"If he dies while bound to me, I'll arrange *that*."

"One dollah an' a half," resumed the sheriff; and falling into the tone of a facile auctioneer he rattled on:

"One dollah an' a half foh ole Sol'mon—sol, sol, sol,—do, re, mi, fa, sol—do, re, mi, fa, sol! Why, gentlemen, you can set the king to music!"

All this time the vagrant had stood in the centre of that close ring of jeering and humourous bystanders—a baffling text from which to have preached a sermon on the infirmities of our imperfect humanity. Some years before, perhaps as a master-stroke of derision, there had been given to him that title which could but heighten the contrast of his personality and estate with every suggestion of the ancient sacred magnificence; and never had the mockery seemed so fine as at this moment, when he was led forth into the streets to receive the lowest sentence of the law upon his poverty and dissolute idleness. He was apparently in the very prime of life—a striking figure, for nature at least had truly done some royal work on him. Over six feet in height, erect, with limbs well shaped and sinewy, with chest and neck full of the lines of great power, a large head thickly covered with long reddish hair, eyes blue, face beardless, complexion fair but discolored by low passions and excesses—such was old King Solomon. He wore a stiff, high, black Castor hat of the period, with the crown smashed in and the torn rim hanging down over one ear; a black cloth coat in the old style, ragged and buttonless; a white cotton shirt, with the broad collar crumpled, wide open at the neck and down his sunburnt bosom; blue jeans pantaloons, patched at the seat and the knees; and ragged cotton socks that fell down over the tops of his dusty shoes, which were open at the heels.

In one corner of his sensual mouth rested the stump of a cigar. Once during the proceedings he had produced another, lighted it, and continued quietly smoking. If he took to himself any shame as the central figure of this ignoble performance, no one knew it. There was something almost royal in his unconcern. The humour, the badinage, the open contempt, of which he was the public target, fell thick and fast upon him, but as harmlessly as would balls of pith upon a coat of mail. In truth, there was that in his great, lazy, gentle, good-humoured bulk and bearing which made the gibes seem all but despicable. He shuffled from one foot to the other as though he found it a trial to stand up so long, but all the while looking the spectators full in the eyes without the least impatience. He suffered the man of the factory to walk round him and push and pinch his muscles as calmly as though he had been the show bull at a country fair. Once only, when the sheriff had pointed across the street at the figure of Mr. Clay, he had looked quickly in that direction with a kindling light in his eye and a passing flush on his face. For the rest, he seemed like a man who has drained his cup of human life and has nothing left him but to fill again and drink without the least surprise or eagerness.

The bidding between the man of the factory and the student had gone slowly on. The price had reached ten dollars. The heat was intense, the sheriff tired. Then something occurred to revivify the scene. Across the market-place and towards the steps of the courthouse there suddenly came trundling along in breathless haste a huge old negress, carrying on one arm a large shallow basket containing apple crab-lanterns and fresh gingerbread. With a series of half-articulate grunts and snorts she approached the edge of the crowd and tried to force her way through. She coaxed, she begged, she elbowed and pushed and scolded, now laughing, and now with the passion of tears in her thick, excited voice. All at once, catching sight of the sheriff, she lifted one ponderous brown arm, naked to the elbow, and waved her hand to him above the heads of those in front.

"Hole on, marster! Hole on!" she cried, in a tone of humourous entreaty. "Don' knock 'im off till I come! Gim *me* a bid at 'im!"

The sheriff paused and smiled. The crowd made way tumultuously, with broad laughter and comment.

"Stan' aside theah an' let Aun' Charlotte in!"

"*Now* you'll see biddin'!"

"Get out of the way foh Aun' Charlotte!"

"Up, my free niggah! Hurrah foh Kentucky!"

A moment more and she stood inside the ring of spectators, her basket on the pavement at her feet, her hands plumped akimbo into her fathomless sides, her head up, and her soft, motherly eyes turned eagerly upon the sheriff. Of the crowd she seemed unconscious, and on the vagrant before her she had not cast a single glance.

She was dressed with perfect neatness. A red and yellow Madras kerchief was bound about her head in a high coil, and another was crossed over the bosom of her stiffly starched and smoothly ironed blue cottonade dress. Rivulets of perspiration ran down over her nose, her temples, and around her ears, and disappeared mysteriously in the creases of her brown neck. A single drop accidentally hung glistening like a diamond on the circlet of one of her large brass ear-rings.

The sheriff looked at her a moment, smiling, but a little disconcerted. The spectacle was unprecedented.

"What do you want heah, Aun' Charlotte?" he asked, kindly. "You can't sell yo' pies an' gingerbread heah."

"I don' *wan'* sell no pies en gingerbread," she replied, contemptuously. "I wan' bid on *him*," and she nodded sidewise at the vagrant.

"White folks allers sellin' niggahs to wuk fuh *dem;* I gwine buy a white man to wuk fuh *me*. En he gwine t' git a mighty hard mistiss, you heah *me!*"

The eyes of the sheriff twinkled with delight.

"Ten dollahs is offahed foh ole King Sol'mon. Is theah any othah bid? Are you all done?"

"'Leben," she said.

Two young ragamuffins crawled among

the legs of the crowd up to her basket and filched pies and cake beneath her very nose.

"Twelve!" cried the student, laughing.

"Thirteen!" she laughed too, but her eyes flashed.

"*You are bidding against a niggah,*" whispered the student's companion in his ear.

"So I am; let's be off," answered the other, with a hot flush on his proud face.

Thus the sale was ended, and the crowd variously dispersed. In a distant corner of the courtyard the ragged urchins were devouring their unexpected booty. The old negress drew a red handkerchief out of her bosom, untied a knot in a corner of it, and counted out the money to the sheriff. Only she and the vagrant were now left on the spot.

"You have bought me. What do you want me to do?" he asked quietly.

"Lohd, honey!" she answered, in a low tone of affectionate chiding, "I don' wan' you to do *nothin'!* I wuzn' gwine t' 'low dem white folks to buy you. Dey'd wuk you till you dropped dead. You go 'long en do ez you please."

She gave a cunning chuckle of triumph in thus setting at naught the ends of justice, and, in a voice rich and musical with affection, she said, as she gave him a little push:

"You bettah be gittin' out o' dis blazin' sun. G' on home! I be 'long by-en-by."

He turned and moved slowly away in the direction of Water Street, where she lived; and she, taking up her basket, shuffled across the market-place towards Cheapside, muttering to herself the while:

"I come mighty nigh gittin' dah too late, foolin' 'long wid dese pies. Sellin' *him* 'ca'se he don' wuk! Umph! If all de men in dis town dat don' wuk wuz to be tuk up en sole, d' wouldn' be 'nough money in de town to buy 'em! Don' I see 'em settin' 'roun' dese taverns f'om mohnin' till night?"

She snorted out her indignation and disgust, and sitting down on the sidewalk, under a Lombardy poplar, uncovered her wares and kept the flies away with a locust bough, not discovering in her alternating good and ill humour, that half of them had been filched by her old tormentors.

This was the memorable scene enacted in Lexington on that memorable day of the year 1833—a day that passed so briskly. For whoever met and spoke together asked the one question: Will the cholera come to Lexington? And the answer always gave a nervous haste to business—a keener thrill to pleasure. It was of the cholera that the negro woman heard two sweet passing ladies speak as she spread her wares on the sidewalk. They were on their way to a little picture-gallery just opened opposite M. Giron's ball-room, and in one breath she heard them discussing their toilets for the evening and in the next several portraits by Jouett.

So the day passed, the night came on, and M. Xaupi gave his brilliant ball. Poor old Xaupi—poor little Frenchman! whirled as a gamin of Paris through the mazes of the Revolution, and lately come all the way to Lexington to teach the people how to dance. Hop about blithely on thy dry legs, basking this night in the waxen radiance of manners and melodies and graces! Where will be thy tunes and airs to-morrow! Ay, smile and prompt away! On and on! Swing corners, ladies and gentlemen! Form the basket! Hands all round!

While the bows were still darting across the strings, out of the low, red east there shot a long, tremulous bow of light up towards the zenith. And then, could human sight have beheld the invisible, it might have seen hovering over the town, over the ball-room, over M. Xaupi, the awful presence of the plague.

But knowing nothing of this, the heated revellers went merrily home in the chill air of the red and saffron dawn. And knowing nothing of it also, a man awakened on the door-step of a house opposite the ball-room, where he had long since fallen asleep. His limbs were cramped and a shiver ran through his frame. Staggering to his feet, he made his way down to the house of Free Charlotte, mounted to his room by means of a stairway opening on the street, threw off his outer garments, kicked off his shoes, and taking a bottle from a closet pressed it several times to his lips with long outward breaths of satisfaction. Then, casting his great white bulk upon the bed, in a minute more he had sunk into a heavy sleep—the usual drunken sleep of old King Solomon.

He, too, had attended M. Xaupi's ball, in his own way and in his proper character, being drawn to the place for the pleasure of seeing the fine ladies arrive and float in, like large white moths of the summer night, of looking in through the open windows at the many-coloured waxen lights and the snowy arms and shoulders, of having blown out to him the perfume and the music; not worthy to go in, being the lowest of the low, but attending from a door-step of the street opposite—with a certain rich passion in his nature for splendour and revelry and sensuous beauty.

II

About 10 o'clock the sunlight entered through the shutters and awoke him. He threw one arm up over his eyes to intercept the burning rays. As he lay outstretched and stripped of grotesque rags, it could be better seen in what a mould nature had cast his figure. His breast, bare and tanned, was barred by full, arching ribs and knotted by crossing muscles; and his shirt-sleeve, falling away to the shoulder from his bent arm, revealed its crowded muscles in the high relief of heroic bronze. For, although he had been sold as a vagrant, old King Solomon had in earlier years followed the trade of a digger of cellars, and the strenuous use of mattock and spade had developed every sinew to the utmost. His whole person, now half naked and in repose, was full of the suggestions of unspent power. Only his face, swollen and red, only his eyes, bloodshot and dull, bore the impress of wasted vitality. There, all too plainly stamped, were the passions long since raging and still on fire.

The sunlight had stirred him to but a low degree of consciousness, and some minutes passed before he realized that a stifling, resinous fume impregnated the air. He sniffed it quickly; through the window seemed to come the smell of burning tar. He sat up on the edge of the bed and vainly tried to clear his thoughts.

The room was a clean but poor habitation—uncarpeted, whitewashed, with a piece or two of the cheapest furniture, and a row of pegs on one wall, where usually hung those tattered coats and pantaloons, miscellaneously collected, that were his purple and fine linen. He turned his eyes in this direction now and noticed that his clothes were missing. The old shoes had disappeared from their corner; the cigar stumps, picked up here and there in the streets according to his wont, were gone from the mantelpiece. Near the door was a large bundle tied up in a sheet. In a state of bewilderment, he asked himself what it all meant. Then a sense of the silence in the street below possessed him. At this hour he was used to hear noises enough—from Hugh Lonney's new bathhouse on one side, from Harry Sikes's barber shop on the other.

A mysterious feeling of terror crept over and helped to sober him. How long had he lain asleep? By degrees he seemed to remember that two or three times he had awakened far enough to drink from the bottle under his pillow, only to sink again into heavier stupefaction. By degrees, too, he seemed to remember that other things had happened—a driving of vehicles this way and that, a hurrying of people along the street. He had thought it the breaking-up of M. Xaupi's ball. More than once had not some one shaken and tried to arouse him? Through the wall of Harry Sikes's barber shop had he not heard cries of pain—sobs of distress?

He staggered to the window, threw open the shutters, and, kneeling at the sill, looked out. The street was deserted. The houses opposite were closed. Cats were sleeping in the silent door-ways. But as he looked up and down he caught sight of people hurrying along cross-streets. From a distant lumber yard came the muffled sound of rapid hammerings. On the air was the faint roll of vehicles—the hush and the vague noises of a general terrifying commotion.

In the middle of the street below him a keg was burning, and, as he looked, the hoops gave way, the tar spread out like a stream of black lava, and a cloud of inky smoke and deep-red furious flame burst upward through the sagging air. Just beneath the window a common cart had been backed close up to the door of the house. In it had been thrown a few small articles of furniture, and on the bottom bedclothes had been spread out as if for a pallet. While he looked old Charlotte hurried out with a pillow.

He called down to her in a strange, unsteady voice:

"What is the matter? What are you doing, Aunt Charlotte?"

She uttered a cry, dropped the pillow, and stared up at him. Her face looked dry and wrinkled.

"My God! De chol'ra's in town! I'm waitin' on you! Dress, en come down en fetch de bun'le by de dooh." And she hurried back into the house.

But he continued leaning on his folded arms, his brain stunned by the shock of the intelligence. Suddenly he leaned far out and looked down at the closed shutters of the barber shop. Old Charlotte reappeared.

"Where is Harry Sikes?" he asked.

"Dead en buried."

"When did he die?"

"Yestidd'y evenin'."

"What day is this?"

"Sadd'y."

M. Xaupi's ball had been on Thursday

evening. That night the cholera had broken out. He had lain in his drunken stupor ever since. Their talk had lasted but a minute, but she looked up anxiously and urged him.

"D' ain' no time to was'e, honey! D' ain' no time to was'e. I done got dis cyart to tek you 'way in, en I be ready to start in a minute. Put yo' clo'es on en bring de bun'le wid all yo' yudder things in it."

With incredible activity she climbed into the cart and began to roll up the bedclothes. In reality she had made up her mind to put him into the cart, and the pallet had been made for him to lie and finish his drunken sleep on, while she drove him away to a place of safety.

Still he did not move from the window-sill. He was thinking of Harry Sikes, who had shaved him many a time for nothing. Then he suddenly called down to her:

"Have many died of the cholera? Are there many cases in town?"

She went on with her preparations and took no notice of him. He repeated the question. She got down quickly from the cart and began to mount the staircase. He went back to bed, pulled the sheet up over him, and propped himself up among the pillows. Her soft, heavy footsteps slurred on the stairway as though her strength were failing, and as soon as she entered the room she sank into a chair, overcome with terror. He looked at her with a sudden sense of pity.

"Don't be frightened," he said, kindly. "It might only make it the worse for you."

"I can't he'p it, honey," she answered, wringing her hands and rocking herself to and fro; "de ole niggah can' he'p it. If de Lohd jes spah me to git out'n dis town wid you! Honey, ain' you able to put on yo' clo'es?"

"You've tied them all up in the sheet."

"De Lohd he'p crazy ole niggah!"

She started up and tugged at the bundle, and laid out a suit of his clothes, if things so incongruous could be called a suit.

"Have many people died of the cholera?"

"Dey been dyin' like sheep ev' since yestidd'y mohnin'—all day, en all las' night, en dis mohnin'! De man he done lock up de huss, en dey been buryin' 'em in cyarts. En de grave-diggah he done run away, en hit look like d' ain' nobody to dig de graves."

She bent over the bundle, tying again the four corners of the sheet. Through the window came the sound of the quick hammers driving nails. She threw up her arms into the air, and then seizing the bundle dragged it rapidly to the door.

"You heah dat? Dey nailin' up cawfins in de lumbah-yahd! Put on yo' clo'es, honey, en come on."

A resolution had suddenly taken shape in his mind.

"Go on away and save your life. Don't wait for me; I'm not going. And good-bye, Aunt Charlotte, in case I don't see you any more. You've been very kind to me—kinder than I deserved. Where have you put my mattock and spade?"

He said this very quietly, and sat up on the edge of the bed, his feet hanging down, and his hand stretched out towards her.

"Honey," she explained, coaxingly, from where she stood, "can't you sobah up a little en put on yo' clo'es? I gwine to tek you 'way to de country. You don' wan' no tools. You can' dig no cellahs now. De chol'ra's in town en de people's dyin' like sheep."

"I expect they will need me," he answered.

She perceived now that he was sober. For an instant her own fear was forgotten in an outburst of resentment and indignation.

"Dig graves fuh 'em, when dey put you up on de block en sell you same ez you wuz a niggah! Dig graves fuh 'em, when dey allers callin' you names on de street en makin' fun o' you!"

"They are not to blame. I have brought it on myself."

"But we can' stay heah en die o' de chol'ra!"

"You mustn't stay. You must go away at once."

"But if I go, who gwine tek cyah o' *you?*"

"Nobody."

She came quickly across the room to the bed, fell on her knees, clasped his feet to her breast, and looked up into his face with an expression of imploring tenderness. Then, with incoherent cries and with sobs and tears, she pleaded with him—pleaded for dear life; his and her own.

It was a strange scene. What historian of the heart will ever be able to do justice to those peculiar ties which bound the heart of the negro in years gone by to a race of not always worthy masters? This old Virginia nurse had known King Solomon when he was a boy playing with her young master, till that young master died on the way to Kentucky.

At the death of her mistress she had become free with a little property. By thrift and industry she had greatly enlarged this. Years passed and she became the only surviving member of the Virginian household, which had emigrated early in the century to the Blue-grass Region. The same wave of emigration had brought in old King Solomon from the same neighbourhood. As she had risen in life, he had sunk. She sat on the sidewalks selling her fruits and cakes; he sat on the sidewalks more idle, more ragged and dissolute. On no other basis than these facts she began to assume a sort of maternal pitying care of him, patching his rags, letting him have money for his vices, and when, a year or two before, he had ceased working almost entirely, giving him a room in her house and taking in payment what he chose to pay.

He brushed his hand quickly across his eyes as she knelt before him now, clasping his feet to her bosom. From coaxing him as an intractable child she had, in the old servile fashion, fallen to imploring him, with touching forgetfulness of their real relations:

"O my marseter! O my marseter Solomon! Go 'way en save yo' life, en tek yo' po' ole niggah wid you!"

But his resolution was formed, and he refused to go. A hurried footstep paused beneath the window and a loud voice called up. The old nurse got up and went to the window. A man was standing by the cart at her door.

"For God's sake, let me have this cart to take my wife and little children away to the country! There is not a vehicle to be had in town. I will pay you—" He stopped, seeing the distress on her face.

"Is he dead?" he asked, for he knew of her care of old King Solomon.

"He *will* die!" she sobbed. "Tilt de t'ings out on de pavement. I gwine t' stay wid 'im en tek cyah o' 'im."

III

A little later, dressed once more in grotesque rags and carrying on his shoulder a rusty mattock and a rusty spade, old King Solomon appeared in the street below and stood looking up and down it with an air of anxious indecision. Then shuffling along rapidly to the corner of Mill Street, he turned up towards Main.

Here a full sense of the terror came to him. A man, hurrying along with his head down, ran full against him and cursed him for the delay:

"Get out of my way, you old beast!" he cried. "If the cholera would carry you off it would be a blessing to the town."

Two or three little children, already orphaned and hungry, wandered past, crying and wringing their hands. A crowd of negro men with the muscles of athletes, some with naked arms, some naked to the waist, their eyes dilated, their mouths hanging open, sped along in tumultuous disorder. The plague had broken out in the hemp factory and scattered them beyond control.

He grew suddenly faint and sick. His senses swam, his heart seemed to cease beating, his tongue burned, his throat was dry, his spine like ice. For a moment the contagion of deadly fear overcame him, and, unable to stand, he reeled to the edge of the sidewalk and sat down.

Before him along the street passed the flying people—men on horseback with their wives behind and children in front, families in carts and wagons, merchants in two-wheeled gigs and sulkies. A huge red and yellow stagecoach rolled ponderously by, filled within, on top, in front, and behind with a company of riotous students of law and of medicine. A rapid chorus of voices shouted to him as they passed:

"Good-bye, Solomon!"

"The cholera'll have you befoah sunset!"

"Better be diggin' yoah grave, Solomon! That'll be yoah last cellah."

"Dig us a big wine cellah undah the Medical Hall while we are away."

"And leave yo' body there! We want yo' skeleton."

"Good-bye, old Solomon!"

A wretched carry-all passed with a household of more wretched women; their tawdry and gay attire, their haggard and painted and ghastly faces, looking horrible in the blaze of the pitiless sunlight. They, too, simpered and hailed him and spent upon him their hardened and degraded badinage. Then there rolled by a high-swung carriage, with the most luxurious of cushions, upholstered with morocco, with a coat-of-arms, a driver and a footman in livery, and drawn by sparkling, prancing horses. Lying back on the satin cushions a fine gentleman; at the window of the carriage two rosy children, who pointed their fingers at the vagrant and turned and looked into their father's face, so that he leaned forward, smiled, leaned back again, and was whirled away to a place of safety.

Thus they passed him, as he sat down on the sidewalk—even physicians from their patients, pastors from their stricken flocks. Why should not he flee? He had no ties, except the faithful affection of an old negress. Should he not at least save her life by going away, seeing that she would not leave him?

The orphaned children wandered past again, sobbing more wearily. He called them to him.

"Why do you not go home? Where is your mother?" he asked.

"She is dead in the house," they answered; "and no one has come to bury her."

Slowly down the street was coming a short funeral train. It passed—a rude cortège: a common cart, in the bottom of which rested a box of plain boards containing the body of the old French dancing-master; walking behind it, with a cambric handkerchief to his eyes, the old French confectioner; at his side, wearing the robes of his office and carrying an umbrella to ward off the burning sun, the beloved Bishop Smith; and behind them, two by two and with linked arms, perhaps a dozen men, most of whom had been at the ball.

No head was lifted or eye turned to notice the vagrant seated on the sidewalk. But when the train had passed he rose, laid his mattock and spade across his shoulder, and, stepping out into the street, fell into line at the end of the procession.

They moved down Short Street to the old burying-ground, where the Baptist churchyard is to-day. As they entered it, two grave-diggers passed out and hurried away. Those before them had fled. They had been at work but a few hours. Overcome with horror at the sight of the dead arriving more and more rapidly, they, too, deserted that post of peril. No one was left. Here and there in the churchyard could be seen bodies awaiting interment. Old King Solomon stepped quietly forward and, getting down into one of the half-finished graves, began to dig.

The vagrant had happened upon an avocation.

IV

All summer long, Clatterbuck's dancing-pavilion was as silent in its grove of oaks as a temple of the Druids, and his pleasure-boat nestled in its moorings, with no hand to feather an oar in the little lake. All summer long, no athletic young Kentuckians came to bathe their white bodies in Hugh Lonney's new bathhouse for twelve and a half cents, and no one read Daukins Tegway's advertisement that he was willing to exchange his Dunstable bonnets for flax and feathers. The likely runaway boy, with a long, fresh scar across his face, was never found, nor the buffalo bull roasted for Daniel Webster, and Peter Leuba's guitars were never thrummed on any moonlit verandas. Only Dewees and Grant were busy, dispensing, not snuff, but calomel.

Grass grew in the deserted streets. Gardens became little wildernesses of rank weeds and riotous creepers. Around shut window-lattices roses clambered and shed their perfume into the poisoned air, or dropped their faded petals to strew the echoless thresholds. In darkened rooms family portraits gazed on sad vacancy or looked helplessly down on rigid sheeted forms.

In the trees of poplar and locust along the streets the unmolested birds built and brooded. The oriole swung its hempen nest from a bough over the door of the spider-tenanted factory, and in front of the old Medical Hall the blue-jay shot up his angry crest and screamed harshly down at the passing bier. In a cage hung against the wall of a house in a retired street a mocking-bird sung, beat its breast against the bars, sung more passionately, grew silent and dropped dead from its perch, never knowing that its mistress had long since become a clod to its full-throated requiem.

Famine lurked in the wake of the pestilence. Markets were closed. A few shops were kept open to furnish necessary supplies. Now and then some old negro might have been seen, driving a meat-wagon in from the country, his nostrils stuffed with white cotton saturated with camphor. Oftener the only visible figure in the streets was that of a faithful priest going about among his perishing fold, or that of the bishop moving hither and thither on his ceaseless ministrations.

But over all the ravages of that terrible time there towered highest the solitary figure of that powerful grave-digger, who, nerved by the spectacle of the common misfortune, by one heroic effort rose for the time above the wrecks of his own nature. In the thick of the plague, in the very garden spot of the pestilence, he ruled like an unterrified king. Through days unnaturally chill with grey cloud and drizzling rain, or unnaturally hot with the fierce sun and suffocating damps that appeared to steam forth from subterranean cauldrons, he worked unfaltering, sometimes with a helper, sometimes with none. There were times when, exhausted, he would lie down in the half-dug graves and there sleep until able to go on; and many a midnight found him under the spectral moon, all but hidden by the rank nightshade as he bent over to mark out the lines of one of those narrow mortal cellars.

V

Nature soon smiles upon her own ravages and strews our graves with flowers, not as memories, but for other flowers when the spring returns.

It was one cool, brilliant morning late in that autumn. The air blew fresh and invigorating, as though on the earth there were no corruption, no death. Far southward had flown the plague. A spectator in the open court-square might have seen many signs of life returning to the town. Students hurried along, talking eagerly. Merchants met for the first time and spoke of the winter trade. An old negress, gayly and neatly dressed, came into the market-place, and sitting down on a sidewalk displayed her yellow and red apples and fragrant gingerbread. She hummed to herself an old cradle-song, and in her soft, motherly black eyes shone a mild, happy radiance. A group of young ragamuffins eyed her longingly from a distance. Court was to open for the first time since the spring. The hour was early, and one by one the lawyers passed slowly in. On the steps of the court-house three men were standing: Thomas Brown, the sheriff, old Peter Leuba, who had just walked over from his music-store on Main Street; and little M. Giron, the French confectioner. Each wore mourning on his hat, and their voices were low and grave.

"Gentlemen," the sheriff was saying, "it was on this very spot the day befoah the cholera broke out that I sole 'im as a vagrant. An' I did the meanes' thing a man can evah do. I hel' 'im up to public ridicule foh his weaknesses an' made spoht of 'is infirmities. I laughed at 'is povahty an' 'is ole clo'es. I delivahed on 'im as complete an oration of sarcastic detraction as I could prepare on the spot, out of my own meanness an' with the vulgah sympathies of the crowd. Gentlemen, if I only had that crowd heah now, an' ole King Sol'mon standin' in the midst of it, that I might ask 'im to accept a humble public apology, offahed from the heaht of one who feels himself unworthy to shake 'is han'! But, gentlemen, that crowd will nevah reassemble. Neahly ev'ry man of them is dead, an' ole King Sol'mon buried them."

"He buried my friend Adolphe Xaupi," said François Giron, touching his eyes with his handkerchief.

"There is a case of my best Jamaica rum for him whenever he comes for it," said old Leuba, clearing his throat.

"But, gentlemen, while we are speakin' of ole King Sol'mon we ought not to fohget who it is that has suppohted 'im. Yondah she sits on the sidewalk, sellin' 'er apples an' gingerbread."

The three men looked in the direction indicated.

"Heah comes ole King Sol'mon now," exclaimed the sheriff.

Across the open square the vagrant was seen walking slowly along with his habitual air of quiet, unobtrusive preoccupation. A minute more and he had come over and passed into the court-house by a side door.

"Is Mr. Clay to be in court to-day?"

"He is expected, I think."

"Then let's go in; there will be a crowd."

"I don't know; so many are dead."

They turned and entered and found seats as quietly as possible; for a strange and sorrowful hush brooded over the court-room. Until the bar assembled, it had not been realized how many were gone. The silence was that of a common overwhelming disaster. No one spoke with his neighbor, no one observed the vagrant as he entered and made his way to a seat on one of the meanest benches, a little apart from the others. He had not sat there since the day of his indictment for vagrancy. The judge took his seat and, making a great effort to control himself, passed his eyes slowly over the court-room. All at once he caught sight of old King Solomon sitting against the wall in an obscure corner; and before any one could know what he was doing, he hurried down and walked up to the vagrant and grasped his hand. He tried to speak, but could not. Old King Solomon had buried his wife and daughter—buried them one clouded midnight, with no one present but himself.

Then the oldest member of the bar started up and followed the example; and then the other members, rising by a common impulse, filed slowly back and one by one wrung that hard and powerful hand. After them came the other persons in the court-room. The vagrant, the grave-digger, had risen and stood against the wall, at first with a white face and a dazed expression, not knowing what it meant; afterwards, when he understood it, his head dropped suddenly forward and his tears fell thick and hot upon the hands that he could not see. And his were not the only tears. Not a man in the long file but paid his tribute of emotion as he stepped forward to honour that image of sadly eclipsed but still effulgent humanity. It was not grief, it was not gratitude, nor any sense of making reparation for the past. It was the softening influence of an act of heroism, which makes every man feel himself a brother hand in hand with every other—such power has a single act of moral greatness to reverse the relations of men, lifting up one, and bringing all others to do him homage.

It was the coronation scene in the life of old King Solomon of Kentucky.

The Third Volume

By MARGARET DELAND

Margaret Deland

I

"YOU could write my life in two volumes," Mr. Peter Walton used to say, in his loud, good-humoured voice: "Vol. I.: All Peter. Vol. II.: Eunice and some Peter."

"The first volume would be short," his brother Paul observed; and Peter agreed that it would not only be short—he was twenty-four when he and Eunice were married, and they were well along in the fifties now,—but worthless.

"The second volume," he said, modestly, "has some respectable things in it, but Eunice is the author of 'em."

There were many respectable things in it; enough to make all but the very good people of Old Chester forget the contents of Volume I. Those who were not very good, like William King, or who had defective memories, like Dr. Lavendar, were heartily fond of the lovable, powerful, opinionated man.

But long after the new leaf had been turned over, and his wife had begun to write the second volume, the good people continued to have him on their minds. For one thing, he sometimes drank too much; and then as Good People like to remember (at the Throne of Grace, if nowhere else), the things that Bad People would like to forget—there was that old friendship with Miss Betsey Darling. (Miss Darling's name was never mentioned before the chaste ears of Old Chester ladies, yet, somehow, it was the ladies who prayed for Mr. Walton!)

Briefly, the Peter Walton of the second volume was an honest and able gentleman, who represented us in Congress, went regularly to church, and supposed that religion meant the contribution-box and the privilege of keeping Dr. Lavendar supplied with extremely good tobacco. Also, he was of that pleasant temperament which believes whatever it is comfortable to believe; he was always able to explain facts to suit his mental necessities.

His brother Paul, a little, spectacled man, whose mild eyes never blinked the truth, whether it was pleasant or unpleasant,—was nearly fifteen years his senior. Paul was, in Old Chester's opinion, entirely ineffective. Once he did effect something, but only two or three people knew it, and to them the thing he effected was accidental; it was, Jim Williams said, as if a child had stopped a locomotive by rolling a rock on to the track.

"But he did stop the locomotive," Dr. King reminded him.

"Happened to," Mr. Williams said, laconically.

The "locomotive" was Peter's affair with the lady whose name was only mentioned at the Throne of Grace. It was when Peter was about twenty-two that he made an ass of himself (to put it mildly); at any rate, Old Chester really had cause to be shocked, and as for Mr. Paul Walton's feelings——

The story ran that Peter kicked the door of his brother's room open at four o'clock in the morning, and rushed in, blazing with anger.

"Look here!" he said; "somebody, I don't know who—some damned old-maid skunk, I suppose; has seen—seen fit—" he trembled so with rage that he stammered; "to take it upon himself to interfere between me and a—a friend of mine; and she—she——"

Paul, lying in the big four-poster that looked like a raft with a mahogany obelisk at each corner, woke with a start, and sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"She's going away; she wouldn't see me"—Peter raved on; he was frantic with pain. "She wouldn't *see* me, I tell you! She sent down word she was going away. I've been under her window all night, and she wouldn't speak. I—" a sob swelled in his young throat—"I'll kill the damned coward who put her against me; I'll——"

Paul nodded gravely; "Then she *is* honest," he said; "I thought she was. Poor creature!"

"If I find out who set her against me," the younger brother stormed, shaking his fists above his head, "I'll kill him!"

"I paid her to get out of town," Paul said, mildly.

The next few minutes were unprintable. What Peter said, and then what he did, left a scar of remorse on his own mind which no later contrition could remove. For after a while, in spite of the agony of loss—to a boy of twenty-two it was agony—and the excruciating humiliation of being protected by another man—Peter was contrite, and said so. A year or two later, when he met Eunice Haydon, he even had a sort of gratitude to his brother, who had "accidentally" stopped the locomotive.

He grinned over it to himself, and wondered how Paul had the courage—"for I'm not pretty when I'm mad," he reflected, candidly. "But old Paul, sitting up there in bed, rubbing his eyes like a baby, was as plucky as a game cock!" Yet neither Peter, nor Jim Williams, nor the doctor credited Paul's conduct to intelligence. "He just took it into his head," Peter told himself.

The fact was, Peter's large and buoyant personality so swamped Paul that no one really knew him. He was supposed to be timid, because he never contradicted anybody, and opinionless, because he never dogmatized. He just pottered about in the Thomas Walton's Sons' warehouse, losing money on scrupulosities of truth-telling which discouraged buyers, and too busy, he said, even to read the newspaper.

"If Paul," the younger brother used to bawl out, "had tar on the seat of his breeches and sat down in a bushel of doubloons, not one of 'em would stick to him!"

Many doubloons, so to speak, had in course of time stuck to Peter—"and Paul and I go halves on everything," Peter said, simply.

The two brothers were alike only in their unshakable integrity and, of course, in their belief that there was no place on earth that compared to Old Chester as a place of residence. (It is only fair to say they were right about that; anybody who has lived there will tell you the same thing.) In fact, the Walton brothers were just like everybody else in town—good *and* bad.

But Peter's wife, the Eunice of Volume II., was not like Old Chester, because she was only good. To begin with, she was a Quakeress—one of the Brighton Haydons, who had a pedigree of saintliness reaching back to English scourgings and buffetings. Perhaps it was the blood of the martyrs in her which made her marry Peter; but whatever it was, she listened to the remonstrances of the whole Haydon connection, then calmly accepted the godly ostracism of Brighton, and married her worldling. Even her lover was awed by her serene indifference to family displeasure.

"If she had taken old Paulus," he said, "I could understand it; for one thing, his clothes are always in order, whereas I look like a rag-and-bottle man."

This was a week before the wedding; it was after dinner, and the table had been cleared. Peter and Jim Williams were playing poker, while Dr. King and Paul Walton looked on.

"Confound you both!" Peter had complained; "this two-handed business is 'pap.'"

The onlookers had refused Peter's invitation to take a hand; William (a newly married man then), because his Martha disapproved of poker, and Paul because he didn't care to lie, even in a game—"anyway, you haven't the brains for it, my good fellow," Peter said, frankly.

"It may be 'pap,'" said Jim, "but—" and he very successfully called his opponent's bluff; a moment later he began to count his winnings on penny stakes. Peter, in his shirt-sleeves, put his feet on the table and ate a peach. A fruit-dish on the sideboard had invited wasps from a garden drowsing in the September sunshine, but the heel-taps in the glasses had become more attractive to them than the fruit. Peter, brushing one of the intruders away with an impatient hand, threw his peach-stone at his brother.

"Old Paul," he said, "isn't such an awful contrast to those holy Haydons; but *me!*"

"You are wrong, my dear Peter," Paul objected, politely; "Miss Haydon never would have honoured me with her regard."

"Mrs. Drayton is so doubtful about Miss Haydon's future happiness, that she says she is going to remember her in her prayers," said the doctor.

"Hate to have old Hellpestle tax her memory," said Peter.

"I'll trouble you for two dollars and forty-two cents, Pete," said Jim Williams.

"It's the contrast that caught her," the doctor said.

Peter took his feet off the table. (The two brothers lived by themselves, unhampered by feminine refinements; still, it was only Peter who put his feet on the dinner-table —"and *you'll* stop it in eight days!" said William King.)

Paul, in tight pantaloons and perfectly fitting coat, stood with an elbow on the mantelpiece, regarding the other three through mildly gleaming spectacles.

"That's a good idea of William's," he ventured to say; "it is doubtless because you are unlike the young lady that you have won her affections." (Mr. Paul Walton's decorum of dress, manners, and language was held up to Old Chester boys by every maiden aunt in town.)

Peter, who had brought his chair down on all four legs, sat up very straight, and fumbled in his pocket for Jim's two dollars and forty-two cents.

"Take it, dog-gone you!" he said, amiably. "There's something in that idea of contrast, Sawbones," he ruminated; "yes; that may be it. (Darn these wasps!) I've sometimes thought the Creator must find Lucifer more entertaining than Gabriel."

"I don't call you Lucifer," Paul protested.

"Some do," Jim Williams said, dryly.

"I don't know that Miss Haydon's regard for you is any more remarkable than yours for her," Dr. King said.

"*That's* the worst thing that was ever said about me," Peter declared, placidly. . . . "Willy, I hear Alex Morgan is goin' to leave town; did you know it?"

"Good idea," said Paul.

"We can spare him," Jim Williams declared. "Peter, he calls you some pretty names."

"Well," Peter said, "I called him some. I threw the whole deck in his face, and said why."

"Queer," Dr. King commented; "I shouldn't have thought that even Alex Morgan would have sold his reputation for a jack-pot."

"His reputation was so small, a deuce in his sleeve could buy it," Peter explained.

"But to cheat!" Jim said; "I'd sooner cut a throat."

"Oh, yes," Peter agreed, carelessly; "a gentleman can cut a throat, but he can't cheat. As for Alex, he's a dead dog so far as this community is concerned, so the sooner he gets out of it the better. If he were my own brother, I'd put on a pair of new boots and assist his departure! And I'd never speak to him again."

"You are a gentle, forgiving creature, Pete," the doctor said, admiringly.

"'*Ne obliviscaris,*'" Peter began; but at that moment a wasp, which had been hovering over a wine-glass, lit on his wrist, and instantly his stamping rage changed the subject.

"Suffering snakes! the thing bit me! Do something, Willy! Do something!"

"Spit on it," Jim Williams advised, riffling the cards lazily.

"Good idea," Paul said, his spectacles shining with sympathy.

"It'll quiet down," the doctor told him; but Peter swore and roared, and told him he was a fool. "Can't you stop it? What's the use of being a sawbones? Paul, haven't you got something among your powders and perfumes? You ought to see Paul's bureau," he said, chuckling. "Look here, Willy, it hurts like the devil!"

"Peter can't stand discomfort for a minute," Paul remarked.

"*Discomfort!*" Peter said, sucking his wrist; "I wish he'd bit you in six places!"

"I would suggest—" Paul began, anxiously; but nobody listened to his suggestion.

"Pity your Quakeress can't see you now," Dr. King said, sardonically.

All the same, William thought that the Quakeress had done well for herself; he and the big, violent, honest man had been friends ever since they were born, and his affection was not dependent upon Peter's manners or language. But William's wife had wondered at Miss Haydon's choice quite as much as did the humble and successful lover.

"Mr. Paul Walton would certainly be more suitable," she had told her husband when the engagement came out. "I very much fear Mr. Peter's language will shock a Quaker girl."

"He's going to speak Miss Haydon's language," William had retorted; "he's going to say 'thee' and 'thou.'"

Mrs. King sniffed: "There are other words than 'thee' and 'thou' in Peter Walton's vocabulary. Mrs. Drayton thinks it is somebody's duty to tell the girl, flatly and frankly, about his card-playing, and about—about That Person."

"Let me know when you do your duty, my dear. I'd like to be behind the door," said William.

So far, nobody had done his duty in regard to Miss Darling; but Willy King took the opportunity, while Peter was sucking his wrist, to report Mrs. Drayton's feeling about cards.

"Tell her I'm going to come down to backgammon," Peter mumbled. "Eunice says cards are the devil's hymn-book, but she won't mind backgammon."

"Is Miss Haydon under the impression that the devil has no interest in dice?" Jim asked, grinning.

"I told her I never had gambled at backgammon," Peter said, simply. "I told her backgammon wasn't like cards."

"Peter can make himself believe whatever he finds convenient," William King said, admiringly.

"Anyway, there'll be no stakes," Peter declared; "Eunice says gambling's wrong."

"She's going to make you walk straight, Peter!"

"I shall walk wherever she tells me," he said.

"How long do you give him to get over it, Willy?" Jim inquired.

Willy did not commit himself; he had "got over" it himself rather quickly; but what was the use of saying so? However, he and Jim reported to Old Chester that Peter had forsworn cards for the sake of his Quaker lady-love. When Mrs. Drayton heard that, she was greatly astonished; she said that perhaps, after all, her prayers had been answered!

"Apparently she hadn't overmuch faith in prayer," Peter said. This was on his wedding-day, and he was standing in front of Paul's looking-glass, swearing and perspiring over his white tie, while the doctor and Jim Williams offered him the assistance of their impudence.

"I would suggest that you turn the short end—" Paul began to instruct him; but no one listened.

"I understand Mrs. Drayton 'hopes' the marriage will turn out well," Willy King said.

"Well, so do I," said Peter. "Darn this tie! Suffering *snakes!*"

II

The marriage did turn out well—very well, although it was put to two pretty severe tests. The first was wealth: Eunice had money, so she and Peter did not have the mutual anxieties and interests of poverty to weld them together; the next was childlessness. With neither poverty nor children to make two one, marriage easily lapses into the mere habit of living together, which at best is dull, and at worst is—well, call it "war."

The bride and groom settled down in the old Walton house. Of course Paul never dreamed of leaving them; for one thing, the place happened to be his, but nobody remembered that.

The house, with the white pillars of its portico rising above the second-story windows, stood close to the river, where the sleek gleam of water curving over the dam filled the air with soft, unending thunder. Yet it was a house of quietness. As soon as you entered it silence seemed to close about you. Excited men who came to talk politics with Peter instinctively lowered their voices, and once across his own threshold even Peter's resonant tones fell to Eunice's calm key.

Children would have broken the quietness—"but *I'm* satisfied!" Peter would say. And no doubt he believed that he was; it was pleasanter to believe that than to sigh for an heir. "I wouldn't want a lot of brats, with their measles and their mumps, bawling about, and taking thy attention from me!" he used to announce, loudly.

What Eunice wanted, she did not say, and he did not see how her "attention" to him betrayed the desire of her empty arms.

Most childless wives who love their husbands are maternal in their care of them. Eunice ordered Peter's clothes, and tried patiently to keep him tidy; she reminded him of his engagements and saw that he did not spend too much money. Before making a public address, he used to "speak his piece" to her, and she coached him, as no doubt his mother, when he was twelve years old, had coached his

On Linden, when the sun was low.

And she told him what he must eat—and what he must not drink. (Alas, how many mothers try to do that!)

She reproved him when he did wrong, but she never talked religion to him; she merely took him to church, and tried to keep him awake during the sermon.

"I didn't know *that,*" he used to say, when some theological statement happened to catch his ear; "do we believe that, Eunice?"

"Yes," she would instruct him.

"Oh, you don't say so! Well, all right; then it's so," he would say, cheerfully. But he never came nearer to the things of the Spirit than such artless acceptance of this or that article of faith to which Dr. Lavendar might refer and which Eunice might indorse. Only once was he known to have instructed her. He had spoken violently of that old scandal about Alex Morgan, and she had rebuked him:

"A mere game is not worthy of such words, Peter."

Then he did speak up. "Thee's always right in everything—except this. This, thee doesn't understand. A lady can't, I suppose. It isn't a matter of a game; it is a matter of honour. Alex is damned."

"Then he needs thy forgiveness."

"Eunice," he said, quietly, "God and a lady may forgive cheating, but I don't." He accepted with secret amusement this innocent ignorance of "honour." It was characteristic of him that he explained it to himself in a way that made what would have been a defect in anyone else redound to her credit. "She is so perfect, she can't even recognize imperfection when she sees it!" But in all lesser matters than "honour," in religion, or clothes or manners, he accepted her guidance implicitly, and believed whatever she told him.

It was the mother in her that cared for the lesser matters, but it was the wife who helped him fight with the beasts at Ephesus; when the beasts were vanquished, the wife exulted; when they won, the mother forgave. . . . He never went near Betsey Darling's end of the town (Betsey had drifted back to Old Chester); gambling, of course, had ceased with his marriage; and certainly he never swore—in Eunice's presence. But conviviality remained the weak place in his armour.

Paul used to put him to bed when he was "overcome" (that was the way Paul expressed it); and the next morning he would come down-stairs, sheepish and ashamed, to look for Eunice. Sometimes he found her awaiting him in the parlour, where on the ceiling the reflection of the water slipping smoothly over the dam played back and forth, back and forth, like unheard music. His apologies were listened to in grave silence.

"A beast would not treat thee as I do," he would protest; "why can't I remember that? Why am I lower than a beast?"

"Because," she explained once, "thee forgets that thee is only a little lower than the angels."

Instantly Peter's remorse changed to embarrassment; he could have borne reproaches, but the slightest reference to things of the soul closed his lips. "I'll take only one glass after this," he told her, shortly. He knew what he was: a poor devil, not worthy to unloose the latchet of her shoes! But at least he was no hypocrite: he would *not* talk religion!

After such a scene as this there would be weeks of only one glass. Once, after many glasses, he came home at dawn and knelt at her chaste knee, weeping like a bad child. (It never occurred to him to conceal anything from her. "I would as soon try to have a secret from the Creator," he told himself.) His confession did not shake her love. Again her silence, her cool hands on his hot face, her calm eyes plumbing his shame and grossness with patience and pity —and forgiveness!

"How can thee forgive this? I never forgive anything, yet I am a sinner!" He looked at her in amazement. "Thee doesn't seem to feel that I've injured thee!" he said with awe; for he never recognized the mother in her, the mother, who can forgive always! To him this exquisite woman was all wife—and the wife forgives only sometimes.

"How can I stop to feel that thee injures me? Thee has injured thyself," she grieved over him, pressing his shamed face against her breast; "it is that which pierces my heart."

He never doubted the miracle of her forgiveness for anything he might do, and alas! he—but we need not go into that. "If she forgives him, whose business is it?" said Willy King. The doctor knew the quality of Eunice's forgiveness; for the time came when he saw poor Betsey Darling go down into the shadows, clinging to that quiet hand—clinging to it even when the cold waters of the River rose about her shrinking feet.

"She can forgive earth its earthiness," Peter said, when his old friend told him of that solemn hour; "the body doesn't count much with Eunice. William, I'm not worthy of her!"

"Why, of course you're not!" the doctor agreed; "has that just struck you?"

"If I get to heaven, it will be by holding on to her petticoats," Peter said.

He had to hold very tightly to those Quaker petticoats when the war broke out. He was a raving, stamping Union man—yet he did not enlist! It was the wife, rather than the mother, who knew what this cost him. Neither did Paul enlist, though he tried to by leaving off his glasses when he went to the recruiting-office. "But he couldn't tell herring from cheese without spectacles," Peter said, with good-humoured contempt.

"Paul isn't big enough for a target," he told William King once, "but he's brave—what there is of him; I've seen him face the guns! *You* know? Poor old Betsey!"

Peter, for Eunice's conscience' sake, was brave enough to stay at home—and people whose memories go back to the sixties will know what courage it took to do that! Instead of enlisting, he ran again for Congress, and sat doggedly at his desk with his hands itching to hold a gun. There was a story of his being twitted upon preserving a whole skin when other men stood up to be shot at. . . .

"I know you help darkies across the border," a man flung at him once over the dinner-table in the old Riggs House in Washington; "but I should think a man of your heft might strike a blow for the flag!"

Peter Walton reddened to his ears, and his fingers tightened on his tumbler of whisky; but he spoke very quietly: "Sir, in deference to the principles of a lady, I serve my country with my head instead of my hands."

A man on the other side of the table sneered: "One of these sentimental Yankee females, I suppose, who like to fuss over a big nig—" His teeth bit off the rest of the sentence. Walton had flung the whisky into his face, and followed it in a sliding jump across the table, table-cloth, dishes, bottles, crumpling and flying before his feet! He had his hand on the man's throat before the startled company knew just what had happened. As, swearing and stuttering, he was pulled away from his prey he stammered out:

"I don't fight—I'm a Quaker! Let me get hold of him—I'll teach him to speak of a white woman in the same breath with—I don't fight! I'm a Quaker!"

III

The second volume of Peter's biography was full of the happiness of monotony. Nothing happened but peace. The war was over, and life in the Waltons' silent house, that thrilled faintly to the jarring tumble of the water breaking into foam below the dam, was as serene as the soul of the saintly woman who was Peter's wife. He was beaten at the polls in the early seventies, and went back to the warehouse, where Paul, too busy to read the newspapers, had been losing money for the last eight or ten years.

When Peter burst in again, his little old brother blew about before him like a dead leaf. Peter would not have slighted Paul for the world, but the sheer pressure of his arrogant energy shouldered the senior partner to the wall and turned the tide of failure. The brothers used to go to the warehouse together every morning, but now Paul read the paper. Peter wrote the letters, and bawled the orders, and roared and raged when people were slow in carrying them out.

In the evening they rode home together again—but as soon as they entered the house, Peter knew his place.

"I always expect to hear Eunice say 'Down charge!' to you, Pete," Dr. King used to declare, chuckling. Certainly the loud voice fell to match the "thee" and "thou" of his address. In the evening the brothers played backgammon until they both almost went to sleep. . . .

So, tranquilly, one by one, the leaves of the second volume were turned. The years passed, and the husband and wife drew nearer the end of the book. Apparently they never thought of "Finis." At least Peter never thought of it. Once, when he built a greenhouse for Eunice, taking infinite pains in regard to its position—"it must be so I can put an extension to it when she wants a bigger place for her flowers," he said;—Mrs. Walton smiled.

"To hear Peter talk, thee'd think I was

going to live for ever," she told her brother-in-law.

"I'll be satisfied if thee lives as long as I do," Peter said.

A shadow fell across her face, and she sighed. It was after dinner, on Sunday, and the three Waltons were sitting down-stairs in the wide hall, that was darkened by the great portico which roofed the second-story windows. Summer blazed up to the cool thresholds of the open doors at each end of the hall. The curving gleam of water on the edge of the dam flashed sometimes through the blossoming locust-trees in front of the house; at the back was the green tunnel of the grape-arbour, its mossy flagstones checkered with sunshine; then blue sky and white clouds and a clover-field murmurous with bees.

Peter, his coat off, his collar open at the throat, a silver tumbler of sangaree beside him, fanned himself violently, mopped his forehead, and vociferated at the weather. Paul's frock-coat was decorously buttoned over a puce-coloured waistcoat, but even his sense of propriety could not protect his wilting collar. Eunice, in a lavender cross-barred muslin with tight sleeves down to her delicate wrists, a white kerchief over her shoulders, sat with her hands folded in her lap, enduring the discomfort with entire patience.

"Suffering snakes! how hot it is!" said Peter; "if thee wasn't here, Eunice, I would be more specific. Paul, get the backgammon-board! I've got to do something, or I'll burst!"

"Good idea," said Paul; he brought the old red board marked "History of England," and for half an hour his stupid moves gave his brother the chance to let off steam. Suddenly Peter shut the board with a slam that scared the swallows, twittering on the rafters of the porch roof.

"Good Lord, Paul! Why did you move that column on your double trays? I could whip you with my eyes shut, my boy."

"So you could," Paul agreed, mildly. "Eunice, I would suggest a fan. No? Well, I'm going to have a look at the horses." He got up and sauntered off to the stable, and Peter, with nothing to do, sat still, fanning and perspiring.

"Paul is a good fellow," he told his wife; "and he has a lot of spunk—*thee* remembers? But it's a pity the Lord didn't give him brains. Eunice! It gets hotter every minute. Doesn't thee feel it?"

"Yes."

"Doesn't thee want a fan?"

"No."

"Suppose I fan thee?"

"If thee pleases."

With a good deal of puffing he edged his chair closer to hers and began to saw the air with great energy. Eunice smiled at him.

"Thee takes good care of me," she said. Then abruptly, she put her hands over her face, and cried out, in a sort of wail: "Oh, if God had but given us children!" Peter's fan paused in mid-air; he stared at her, his lips falling apart with astonishment. "Thee would have had some one to care for thee when I am gone," she said, in a whisper.

The poignancy of such a cry from such serene lips was almost terrifying.

"What on earth is thee—is thee talking about!" Peter stammered.

But the gust of passion was gone; the fear—if it was a fear—calmed into her usual calm speech. "Thee knows one or the other of us must go first. I hope it may be thee. If it is I, I hope thee will marry again."

"Eunice! Stop! I don't like—that sort of talk. Besides, we shall both live for years. You're only fifty-five. And—and I won't let you go." In his panic he lapsed back to the speech natural to him. "If you do," he said, loudly, "by God, I'll follow you!"

She laid a quiet hand on his. "Peter, we each must go in the path ordained for us from the beginning. Be still."

And immediately the winds and the waves of that violent and loving heart obeyed her. He was still. But that night he hardly slept. Somehow, it was not as easy as usual to adjust the facts of life to that blindness to the future which was necessary to his peace of mind. Yet the habit of years helped him to do it, and by the next morning he was full of plans for her pleasure that challenged Time! She must have this, she must have that; a new porch at the back of the house; a bigger garden. "I wish thee wore jewelry," he said, wistfully,—which made her smile.

But she did not speak to him again of the Inexorable Day, and Peter having made himself believe what was necessary to his comfort, was confident that her reference to it was only a passing mood. "She was morbid," he said; "she has forgotten it by this time. As for me, I never think of such things! It's foolish."

So he went on making plans that defied the future; he set out a row of arbor-vitæs on the north side of the garden. "In twenty years they'll make a splendid windbreak for thee," he said. And again the shadow fell across her face. It was always a peaceful face. Once or twice, lately, it seemed as if she tried to speak to him of something under the peace, but he shied away from any approach to things below the surface, telling himself that he did not know at what she hinted.

Then the blow fell. . . . It was only a few weeks later, on a serene July morning, that she was taken ill. It was very sharp, very terrifying, very short. Then, while they watched her, scarcely daring to breathe, the flame of Life, fluttering and blowing, rose again, and burned steadily in her quiet eyes.

"She is out of danger," William King said, when he left her room and went down-stairs into the dining-room with Peter, who was still shaking so that he could hardly hold the decanter steady enough to give the doctor a glass of wine. "It's her heart," Willy said; "I've been afraid of it for some time." His face was wrung with fatigue and pity.

"But she's out of danger? You said she was out of danger!"

"Yes; at this moment."

"She—she won't ever have another attack?"

"I hope not; but, of course——"

"You don't think she will?" the terrified husband entreated.

"She may not," William said, reassuringly.

"You think she won't?" Peter gasped.

"Well, we'll do all we can to prevent it," the doctor said; his voice was professionally cheerful.

"Then you are not anxious about her—thank God!" Peter said. He drew a long breath of relief, and the water stood in his eyes. "William, I felt the life run out of me this morning before you came! It seemed to go out of my knees."

His friend nodded. "I was scared myself."

"But you're not scared now?" Peter said, following him down to the gate, where the doctor's mare had been stamping and switching at the flies for the last two hours. "You just said you weren't anxious," he insisted, fiercely; "you said she wasn't in any danger now!" He had begun to tremble again.

"Why, I wouldn't go away if she were in danger, now," Willy said, honestly enough, and climbed into his muddy old buggy. "But I don't like it, Jinny," he told his mare, as they jogged along towards Old Chester; "I don't like it!"

Peter went back to the house exultantly. "William isn't in the least anxious about her," he said, loudly. Paul, who was waiting for him in the hall, silently followed him to the sideboard in the dining-room. Peter's hand was still shaking so that the silver collar around the neck of the old cut-glass decanter clattered faintly.

"Peter," Paul said, his spectacles gleaming politely, "I would suggest that you refrain."

"God, man! I've got to have a drink. I'm shaken to pieces," Peter said. "It is all right now, but I thought—I thought I'd lost her."

"She is reposing at present?"

"Yes; oh yes; she is perfectly well now. And William says she'll never have another attack; but—" He stopped and drank some whisky, the tumbler, in his trembling hand, clicking against his teeth. Paul seemed about to speak, but closed his lips.

"You see," Peter burst out, "it came over me, all of a sudden, that there were so many things we hadn't talked about, she and I. I didn't know just how she felt about—about afterwards."

He spoke for the relief of speaking, not with any thought that Paul might reply.

"She'll go to heaven, if there is a heaven! But I—what about me? Maybe I couldn't find my way in. It came over me, all of a sudden, that we'd never talked about—about that. She never told me just how things were. And I don't know. I always meant to ask her what I must believe, but—I couldn't. Couldn't speak of it, somehow. And now—*I don't know.*" His voice was broken with terror; he had apparently forgotten his brother's presence. "As soon as she gets well I'll ask her. . . . Not that there's any hurry—" he interrupted himself, "we're both going to live for years!"

He turned as if to pour out some more whisky, but Paul shoved the decanter away from him.

"I would suggest that you should go up-stairs and sit with her," he said.

"I'm just going. You tell those females in the kitchen to make a lot of jelly and beef tea and stuff for her."

Paul nodded. "Good idea."

"I tell you what," Peter said, with a long breath of relief, "that business this morning pretty well knocked me over—but William has no anxiety whatever," he added, quickly.

Paul winced. "He didn't say just that."

Peter looked at him angrily. "He did!" he said, and turned and went hurriedly up-stairs. His entrance into the quiet room was like a gust of fresh wind.

He found a maid with his wife, and

banished her noisily. "I'll take care of Mrs. Walton! You go and make wine jelly for her!"

When the woman had gone he was full of the pathetic and useless services of an anxious man. Didn't Eunice want a hot brick at her feet? Did she feel a draught from the window? He was sure there was a draught! Why hadn't that fool girl shut the window? She looked a little warm; why hadn't Margaret had the sense to fan her? Where was there a fan? Well, this newspaper would do. Oughtn't she to have a drink of water?—or a glass of port?

She smiled, silently, watching him with tender eyes, and bearing with heavenly patience the crackling wave of the newspaper.

"William says thee'll never have another attack," he reassured her, boisterously; "but thee did give me a scare, Eunice!"

She smiled again, and tried to say (she was so very weak!) she "was . . . sorry."

"Oh, it's of no consequence; although just for a minute I was anxious. Unnecessarily so, of course. But, you see, the fact was—" he paused, his voice was suddenly anguished; "it came over me, Eunice, that I didn't just know, I hadn't thought to—to ask thee, what we believed about—I mean just what would happen, if—if anything happened to either of us." Abrupt tears fell down his face. "Thee never told me," he reproached her, with a sort of sob, "what I believed, or what I was to do, if . . ." he seemed like a frightened child; "Of course, it's all right now; William has no anxiety about thee! Only, for a minute, I—" His breath caught in his throat and he hid his face in the newspaper; then he laughed; "I'm a fool!"

"Peter . . . Be still."

He swallowed hard, and began to wave the crumpled paper over her head. But he was still. Suddenly he said, "I'm going to put one of those new bay-windows on the parlour for thee, Eunice."

"Peter . . . Who will . . . take care of thee?"

It was only a whisper, so he could make himself believe that he had not heard it, and get up and bustle about, bursting into noisy abjurations of Margaret because there was no extra blanket on the foot of the bed. "Donkey! I'll go and get a comforter, and——"

"Too warm. . . . Don't."

So he sat down; then bent over and kissed the hand—that frail, maternal hand!—that lay so quietly on the sheet.

"Peter, listen. If . . . I go . . . I want thee . . . marry again."

Then he made no pretence. "Never! What, put any woman into your place? Never."

"Thee must. Thee must." Her eyes were full of despairing understanding of him; he flung his poor, pitiful truth back to them:

"I couldn't. I couldn't have a wife. . . . Besides—there are plenty of women. . . . But no wife! I won't marry; I *won't!* Don't ask me to, Eunice. Don't! I couldn't."

She turned her head away. "My poor Peter," she said.

Peter, slipping to his knees, hid his face in the bedclothes; she put her hand on his head, and stroked his hair. He heard her sigh. He set his teeth, wiped his eyes furtively on a corner of the sheet, and getting up, began to wave the newspaper vigorously. "Now stop talking," he said, with loud cheerfulness; "thee's perfectly well, so there's no use thinking about—things like that. Besides, thee ought to sleep. Thee mustn't talk. I'll talk to thee. Willy King says his strawberries are still bearing——"

"Go down and play backgammon with Paul," she said; "I'm quite comfortable."

Her voice was so much stronger that his heart bounded with joy. "We'll play up here, and then thee can speak if thee wants anything. Paul!" he shouted; "come upstairs, and bring the backgammon-board. Eunice wants us to play up here." He left her—quivering a little from the jar of his voice—long enough to meet his brother at the head of the stairs, and whisper, loudly, "She won't know we're anxious if she sees us playing."

Then he went back and tucked the sheet tightly under her shoulders. "Go to sleep! Thee mustn't talk. Paul and I'll sit here and play."

She smiled, loosened the sheet furtively, and closed her eyes. Her husband and brother sat at the foot of the bed, whispering to each other now and then, and throwing the dice into the palm of their hands so that the rattle should not disturb her.

The day was falling into the quiet afternoon. Outside Eunice's window, the locust-leaves moved a little, and some swallows, flying back and forth with mud for the nest they were building under the roof of the portico, perched on the scroll of a pillar and scolded each other; the muffled noises of the game rose, and fell, and rose again, but the ceaseless plunge and clamour of the water folded all the little noises into one pervasive sound, full, deep, rhythmical, an Earth lullaby for tired Life.

By and by Eunice sank into the harmony, and slept. Peter, tiptoeing clumsily over to look at her, saw the colour flooding back into her face.

"We can go down-stairs," he whispered, loudly, to Paul; "she's perfectly well now. But I'll send one of the girls up to sit here."

IV

She slept most of the afternoon, and woke about five, so bright and strong that Peter forgot that he had ever been anxious.

"Come out on the porch and smoke," he told his brother; "Ellen and Margaret will sit with her for a while."

"Good idea," Paul murmured.

They put their chairs directly beneath Eunice's windows; the swallows, building under the porch roof, were still now, and the noise of the dam was hushed, for the evening wind was carrying the sound of the falling waters to the other side of the river. It was so peaceful that they could hear the voices of the women in the room above them, and sometimes a little laugh—that fluttered laugh which means release from terror.

"Those girls adore her," Peter said.

"Everybody does," said Paul.

There was a long silence; then Peter drew a deep breath, and threw up his arms with a gesture of relief. "What a day!" he said; "Paul, I've got to go first. This proves it. I couldn't stand it. Yes; she's got to let me go first."

"It is to be regretted that we cannot arrange such matters," Paul said, his spectacles gleaming with sympathy.

Peter was not listening. "I tell you what!" he burst out, "I'm going to talk about—things, with her. You can bet your boots on that! I got a scare at my own ignorance this morning. I told her so. Yes; there's no use putting—things—*you* know what I mean? behind your back."

His brother nodded.

"I suppose you've got it all cut and dried?" Peter said, carelessly.

"I just believe what everybody else does."

"Well, I shall believe what she does. It will be all right after this. Eunice will tell me."

"Dr. Lavendar would tell you."

"Oh, well, that's his business, you know. With all respect to the cloth, I'd rather have Eunice's ideas. However, we needn't talk about it, now. Everything is all right. Paul, what do you think of building a little summer-house for her over by the dam?" He was glad to have Paul to talk to; talking kept him from examining too closely his certainty that all was well. "She's *absolutely* all right," he declared. "Yes; I'm going to build a summer-house for her. I have an idea of a Chinese pagoda. Got a pencil? Here, I'll draw it on this envelope. Like this, you see——"

"Good idea," Paul said.

"I guess I'll take her to Philadelphia for a little trip," Peter ruminated; "might as well see another doctor, too. William's all right in ordinary things, like that attack this morning. I remember William when we were both put into breeches. You kind of don't have much confidence in a man when you remember him that way? He's too much like yourself. I want some real doctor to advise her about food, and all that kind of thing. I think she ought to take some kind of tonic; Willy doesn't give enough medicine. He does as well as he knows how, but——"

"Oh— Oh—" A voice shrilled down from the open window above them.

Then another voice: "*Run!* The doctor——"

There were flying feet on the stairs. "Mr. Walton——"

Even as the two men rushed into the house, they heard a scream:

"She's dead——"

They jostled each other on the staircase, and somehow Paul was first—it seemed as if Peter's feet were made of lead. At the door of her room, the sweat beading on his forehead from the effort to lift those heavy feet, he reeled and lurched against the wall; then stood, transfixed, staring. It was Paul who ran to her bedside, called her name, poured out a little brandy and held it to her mouth. Her delicate head fell to one side, and the brandy trickled from her parted lips. Peter, his hand over his mouth, still leaned against the frame of the door, gaping at his brother, and at the weeping women. Under his breath he said, thickly, "No, no, no."

Paul, laying the still figure back on the pillows, came over to him, touching him on the shoulder, and trying to speak. Peter was motionless, his face rigid. Through the open window, rising and falling with the evening wind, came the sound of many waters; the house thrilled faintly, like the thrilling of a muted harp-string. No one spoke. Then Peter said, in a loud whisper: "*There's some mistake!*"

Paul, weeping, shook his head. "Look," he said, and led him, almost pushed him to the bedside. As Peter stood there, agape, his eyes fixed on the calm face, Paul gave hurried, frightened orders: "Saddle a horse! Bring the doctor! Instantly!" Then turned back to the silent man, still standing there, looking at the eternal silence before him. . . .

They stayed beside her until William King came, Peter quite speechless, except that he said once, dully, "It's a mistake—a mistake." And again: "I don't believe it."

There was nothing for the doctor to do. She had gone.

"*Where?*" Peter said in a whisper.

When William said, brokenly, something of heaven, he looked at him, blankly; then turned away, saying, in a loud voice:

"Get me some whisky!"

Dr. King nodded. "Yes; let him have it."

V

It was after twelve o'clock before the brothers were alone; then, reluctantly, William King went home.

"There's nothing more I can do," he told Paul. "I think he has stopped walking about. I left him sitting down. Get him to take that medicine I put in your room, if you can. He knocked the glass out of my hand when I gave it to him. But maybe he'll listen to you. I wish Dr. Lavendar was at home!"

When Paul went up-stairs to that quiet room, he found Peter standing with one foot on the rung of a chair, his elbow on his knee, his chin on his clenched hand.

"Send those women away," he said.

"Good idea," Paul said, and signed to Ellen and Margaret, who were watching the quiet figure on the bed.

When they had gone, Peter, his chin still resting on his hand, looked at his brother, and motioned with his head towards the door.

"I don't want to leave you, Peter."

Apparently he was not heard.

"Peter, won't you come into my room and go to bed?"

Silence. Peter was staring at the white stillness of the covering sheet. Down in the front hall the clock struck one. Peter stood upright, drew a long breath, and seemed to brace himself as if for some tremendous effort of will; then, loudly:

"Eunice!"

Silence; except for the water, falling—falling—falling. And again:

"*Eunice . . .?*"

He put his hand over his lips, as though even his own breathing must not break in upon his listening. But she did not answer. She, who had answered even his thoughts for all these years, was deaf to that orphaned cry! The night wind, hesitating, entering, flagging, made the sheet waver; the flame of the lamp shivered and Peter's listening shadow moved, monstrous, shapeless, across the bed and over the ceiling.

Silence. . . .

Stumbling back into a chair, he flung up his arms, and then his head sank into his hands. After a long while he lifted himself. "She's dead," he said. He looked at his brother, blinking, as though awakening from a stupor: "You here? William gone?"

"Yes; there was nothing he could——"

"Of course not. She's dead. Now you go, too."

"I am going to stay with you, Peter."

"I don't want you. Go."

It was at that moment that Paul saw, on the old red backgammon-board, which was still lying on the table at the foot of the bed, a pistol-case. His heart stood still. Peter, following his horrified eyes, nodded impatiently.

"Yes," he said.

"Peter, for God's——"

"I'm going after her. William stayed, and then those women came in. Now you're here. Why can't I be alone a minute? I ought to have gone at once—but I wasn't *sure*—I wanted to call her."

Paul put a hand on his shoulder. "You are out of your mind! Come into my room, away from—from— You'll come to your senses if you will just get out of this room."

"I am in my senses now. I'm going to follow her. Can't you understand me? I'm going after her! They've all interrupted me—" He had forgotten Paul's presence and was talking rapidly to himself. "William stayed for hours. I couldn't get rid of him. He wanted to give me an opiate. An opiate!—to-night, of all nights! As if I could take the time to sleep! I mustn't lose another minute; not a minute." He was mumbling so that Paul could hardly hear him. "She's started, and I must catch up to her. I'm late now; very late!"

Paul put a shaking hand on the pistol-case. "It would be a sin——"

Peter looked at him for an astonished moment. "You?" he said; "I keep forgetting you are here. Don't talk religion. This is no time for religion! I'd commit every sin on earth to be with her! Give me that case."

He leaped at his brother, and a board in the floor creaked and sagged under his feet; the lamp on the bureau shook, and the shadows lurched about the room. Paul, holding the pistol-case behind him, fended him off with a bent elbow.

"Listen; it is cowardly!"

"Give it to me."

"Eunice would say it was wicked!"

For one instant her name checked him. Then he nodded his head. "But she'll forgive me. She's always forgiving me! And when she sees me coming, just as fast as I can, she'll— Oh, I'm late, I'm late! I'll make it all right with her as soon as I catch up to her. I promise you I will. Let me go!"

"He is mad," Paul was saying to himself. "How can I get word to William?"

He could not get word to any one. To attempt to leave the room, taking the pistol-case with him, was to invite a struggle, there, in that sacred presence! And to leave the pistols—Paul shook with terror. What could he say? Only the most commonplace words came stammering to his lips.

"She's seven hours ahead of you. You can't catch up to her!"

Peter stopped short, his crazy face suddenly keenly reasonable.

"Besides, how do you know which way she's gone?" Paul argued, backing away from him.

"I'll find her!"

"Maybe you can't. Maybe the track is all arranged, and the roads are to meet—yours and hers, some time. You run a risk; *you may be starting too soon.* Don't you see? A short cut may take you on ahead of her. You may miss her—in the dark."

Peter's eyes narrowed; he seemed to think deeply.

"I would suggest," Paul said, trembling, "that you should wait. It's something we don't understand, this business of Death. Life may be a big plan—" he was talking against time, stammering, repeating himself, talking on, and on, and on: "a plan; we travel along our own paths in it; each of us, you, me, Eunice. Paths side by side. Then hers branches off, for a while. It will meet yours again, somewhere. We don't know just where. But if you take a short cut, you may miss the cross-roads! Perhaps," he stopped, gathering his courage for a wild risk, "*perhaps* if you'd done it this afternoon—but it's hours too late now! If you get out of your own path, now, you'll be ahead of her, and she won't be able to find you. She'll hunt for you in the dark; maybe wait, or lose her way; and all the time you'll be far ahead!"

Peter listened intently. "She said something once about paths. I remember that." He paused, staring blindly ahead of him. "I can see there is a chance of missing her," he said. He sat down and leaned his head in his hands; his shoulders loomed black against the stark figure on the bed.

Paul quivered with relief; neither man spoke. Suddenly Peter got on his feet.

"But it's a chance, either way. If I go, I may catch up to her—and I may not. If I wait, I may find her when my time comes—or I may not. Nobody knows. I'll chance it! I'll go."

Paul broke into terrified entreaties and arguments, but it was evident that his brother was not listening. He was talking to himself: "If she'd only told me what to do! But I wouldn't let her. It was my fault. Why didn't I let her tell me? She was always trying to, and I wouldn't let her. What a coward I was! And now I've just got to blunder along." He put his hand out for the case, still gripped under Paul's arm.

"Wait, just till morning—" Paul said. ("If I can stave him off till daylight, he'll come to himself," he thought, wildly.) "*If* it is a chance either way," he argued, slyly, "how do you know which chance to take? Good idea to wait, and think it over very carefully."

Peter gave him another of those strangely lucid looks. "There is no use in thinking it over. There's no way of deciding which is the best thing to do. No; I think I'd better chance chance." He was evidently hesitating. Paul heard his sigh of perplexity. "I could toss for it?" he said; he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a coin. As he balanced it on his thumb, his face grew quite calm; "Yes; I'll toss for it," he decided.

"Wait just a minute," Paul gasped. "Cards are better than a coin," he managed to say.

"She doesn't approve of cards."

"She would have called a toss-up gambling."

Peter frowned. "So she would," he said, impatiently, and put the coin back in his pocket; "but—" His voice trailed into silence. They both looked over at the sheeted figure, as if she would tell them what to do.

"I've got to do something," Peter said, fretfully.

"I don't see how you can," Paul objected, speaking very gently. "You see, she didn't approve of cards, or of flipping a coin, either. So we'll have to wait until morning." His eyes strained into the darkness outside for some hint of dawn.

Peter was not listening. He was evidently puzzled; neither cards nor a coin? "What *can* I do?" he said; then his eye fell on the backgammon-board. "Why, that's the thing!" he said, almost joyously. "Why didn't I think of it? Eunice doesn't mind backgammon. We'll play one game. If I win, I'll go."

He brought the little table close to the bedside, and drew up the chairs; his mad eyes were eager and satisfied. "Sit down!" he said. He himself sat down and opened the board. "Reds or whites?" he asked, and fumbled about for the dice. Paul stood still, thinking intently. Then his face lightened, as if with some solemn purpose; he nodded his head, very slowly, and took his seat.

"Reds or whites?" Peter said again, impatiently.

Paul delayed; "Throw for it." The toss brought him the reds. Peter arranged his men swiftly. "Begin!" he said. The clock struck two.

Paul demurred. "No; toss for first throw."

Peter tossed. "Mine," he said, and began to play while Paul was still arranging his men, fumbling over them, dropping a checker, picking it up, and dropping it again. "Throw into your hand," he said, in a low voice; "there must be no noise."

Peter nodded. "Hurry."

Paul, looking past the crazy face at the dead woman on the bed, called to her in his heart for help,—and threw low. Peter followed in a flash with five and four, and moved his men swiftly. "Your throw!"

Paul deliberated, delayed, again threw low; moved his men one by one, very slowly; then moved them back; deliberated; and finally placed them. Peter struck the board with his dice-box.

"Hurry! Hurry!"

For the next quarter of an hour the plays were made with every possible hesitation on Paul's part, and in total silence save for the soft cupping sound of the dice slipping into each palm, and the monotonous plunging of the water outside. Paul gained. Peter began to mutter to himself.

"I must win, Eunice, I *must* win! Help me and I'll catch up to you, somehow. Fix the dice, Eunice, fix them!"

Under his breath, his brother, too, was saying, "Eunice, show me how to do it." His dice came faltering into his thin old hand; Peter, looking once into his palm, gave a grunt of contempt.

"One and three! You'll have to do better than that," he said, and flung double fives. Paul could hardly hold his dice-box. . . . Peter's next move threw one of Paul's men out.

"Let us make it the best two games in three," Paul entreated. Peter, his eyes glittering, said, loudly:

"No! One game. Eunice is deciding it. One game! If she gives it to me, I'll follow her; if she gives it to you, I'll wait. I'm whipping you, Paul; do you see? Eunice, I'm walloping him! You are going to let me come—Gammon! Gammon! I'm whipping him!"

He was. Paul threw low. Peter laughed loudly. "Eunice! I knew you would say 'Come!'" Then he looked into his own palm and frowned,—one and two. Paul threw high. Peter panted with terror: "Eunice, that was a mistake. You mustn't let him throw high!" Suddenly he put down his dice-box, and, turning, drew her hand from under the sheet.

Paul shivered back. "Peter, stop! It's sacrilege!"

But he would not stop. "She shall throw," he said; and closing the small, cold fingers around the box, let the dice fall into his own palm. "Double fives! Good for you, Eunice! I'll come." He put her hand back under the sheet. "You see?" he said, triumphantly; "she wants me!" And he moved his men.

Paul was breathing hard; he shook his dice-box softly, up and down, up and down—

"Throw!" Peter commanded.

But Paul delayed.

"Throw! I have no time to lose—"

Slowly the old brother slid the dice into his hand, instantly closed his fingers on them and swept them back into his box.

"What was it? I didn't see—"

"Double sixes," the older man said, in a whisper.

Peter's face changed sharply. "I thought it was five and two?"

Paul's veined old hand moved his men forward like a regiment.

Peter glared at him. "I *thought* I saw a deuce?" he questioned.

"It was double sixes," his brother repeated; and a moment later: "I've won."

Peter looked at the board, open-mouthed. "Why, Eunice!" he said; the reproachful astonishment of his voice was pitiful; "you

want me to wait?" he said, incredulously. It seemed as if he could not believe it. "Why *Eunice!*" He reproached her again, and suddenly burst out crying, like a child. "Please, Eunice, please—please——"

But even as he spoke his head sank on his breast; then his whole big body crumpled up, and he fell forward over the backgammon-board, which lurched and tilted, until the red and white checkers tumbled out and rolled over the carpet. The board closed with a bang. Peter slipped slowly sidewise to the floor.

He was insensible when his brother reached him; and Paul, loosening his collar, looked over at the shape of peace under the white sheet, and said, brokenly:

"I had to, Eunice; it was the only way."

VI

Of course it was the only way. When William heard what Paul had done, he said so, emphatically.

"When Peter comes to himself, he will be the first to admit it," he tried to comfort Paul, when, with a rigid face, the little old brother confessed his deception. He did not confess it for nearly a month, and then it was wrung from him only because of Peter's wonderful calmness. For Peter had opened the third volume. . . . The first volume had been written with the bold hand of Joy, and its words were Selfishness and Arrogance and Power. The second was written by the hand of Love; its words were Success and Content. In the third, there was to be only one word, written by the small, dead hand of Vanished Happiness—the word Peace. Sometimes it seemed as if that gentle hand touched him on the shoulder, as if to say, "*Be still.*" For he was very still.

At first his stillness was the stillness of something dead—dead joy, dead hope. But by and by it seemed to be only the pause of Life, waiting to live more fully; for, to everybody's astonishment, he began to accept grief with a sweetness that was almost cheerfulness. It was then that William King commented on it to Paul.

"I'm thankful he takes it this way," Willy said, "but I don't understand it."

"I understand it," the old man said, slowly. He was dreadfully haggard; more so, the doctor thought, perplexed, than was Peter himself; and his nervousness was pitiably apparent.

"He seems entirely resigned," said Dr. King.

"He thinks he is," Paul said; then broke out: "I deceived him; that's why he's resigned."

The doctor looked at him closely. "Better tell me about it," he said, kindly. When he had been told, he said just what Paul himself had said: "It was the only way."

"Yes," Paul agreed, "it was a good idea. He'd have won if I hadn't lied to him. But he will never forgive me when he knows it."

"Oh, yes, he will," William assured him. "Peter would be the first to say you did right. Why, my dear fellow, he was out of his mind! Of course you had to—to——"

"—*cheat*," Paul ended, briefly.

"It wasn't cheating," William said, stoutly. "It was no more than every doctor does a hundred times in his practice."

"That," the little man interrupted, drearily, "is why Peter doesn't like doctors—except you. He says they are liars. And Peter never forgives a lie. He says it's damnable. And of course it is. But I'm willing to be damned. You mustn't think I mind being damned. If it was to be done over again, I should do it. But he will never forgive me. That's what I mind."

"Well, then, don't tell him," the doctor said, bluntly; "at any rate, until he's himself again."

"Good idea," said Paul, dully.

But the "self" they had known was long in coming. The man of violence and intolerance was gone, and in his place was a very quiet man, very still, very patient. A man who waited. He was willing enough to say why this change had come: "She won that game," he told Paul once, in those first weeks of stunned obedience. "She fixed the dice. So I am willing to wait." He even spoke to Dr. King about it. "I want you to know Eunice gave me a sign, William. I didn't use to believe in ghosts, and that sort of thing, but I do now. Eunice gave me a sign."

William King nodded.

"I'd just as lief tell you about it," Peter said. "I wanted to rush right after her, that night she died, and I got out my pistol. And Paul came in and suggested that I might miss her. Seemed reasonable, when I stopped to think of it. So I said, 'we'll leave it to chance.' So we played for it. I told Eunice that if she could fix it so we could meet, to let me know by making me win. If she couldn't, why, she must give Paul the game. He threw double sixes. That settled it. It's hard to wait, William, but I always have followed Eunice's judgment in matters of that kind."

"I see," William said, gravely. "Well, I am sure Eunice was right."

"I am satisfied," Peter said, contentedly, "and I tell you what, Willy, I owe it all to old Paulus. He suggested it. If it hadn't been for him I'd have gone blundering after her, and got lost, sure as you're alive! Paul saved me."

When the doctor repeated this to Paul Walton, the old man (he had grown old very rapidly after that night of grief and fear and deceit) looked at him with dismay.

"Why did you pretend it was so?"

"Because it makes him happier to believe it, and it doesn't do anybody any harm."

Paul shook his head, but William insisted.

"On that one point Peter isn't sane; but it's better to be crazy on one point and happy, than sane on all points and unhappy. You must never tell him, Paul."

"I'll have to, some time," Paul said; "I couldn't die with a lie between us."

That night, in Dr. Lavendar's study, William justified himself: "Of course, Paul had to cheat," he said, "but poor old Peter!" he ended, sighing, "he is just like a lost child! She used to do his thinking for him. Do you remember how he used to say his life was written in two volumes? The first volume was all Peter; the second, Eunice and Peter?"

"What about the third volume?" said Dr. Lavendar.

William looked surprised: "You mean his life without her?"

"The third volume will be *all* Eunice," Dr. Lavendar said.

"Oh," said William, vaguely; "yes." Of course, Dr. Lavendar was right, but ordinary folks have to keep their feet on the earth, and as far as this earth goes, Peter had lost Eunice. William did not obtrude his materialism. "Isn't it strange?" he said. "In everything else Peter is as sane as a clock, but he really believes she gave Paul that game! Of course Paul must hold his tongue."

"Doctors are always certain of everything," Dr. Lavendar said, admiringly. "Now, some of the rest of us wouldn't dare say she didn't;—or she did. And as for a lie, it's a dangerous thing to live with; it festers."

William listened—respectfully, of course; but he said to himself that the old saint was really getting pretty old. "We mustn't say a word about it," he admonished him, kindly, but a little condescendingly.

Dr. Lavendar cocked an eye at him over his spectacles: "When you retire from the case, William, I will prescribe; or I'll present you with my formula now? Paul ought to have told Peter the next day; *but not on Peter's account!* The Kingdom of Heaven has suffered a good deal of violence from Peter; he has always taken it by force and he always will. But Paul ought to have told him for his own sake."

There was, however, so far as anybody knew, no occasion for Dr. Lavendar to prescribe. Paul's remorse was silent. All the same, the lie festered in his heart, as Dr. Lavendar had said it would. The second year he began to fail.

"He has never got over Eunice's loss," Peter told William King; the doctor had been summoned one January morning, and was struggling into his big buffalo coat in the hall.

"Very cold weather is hard on old people," he encouraged Peter.

But Peter knew it was not the weather that was sapping Paul. "He misses Eunice," he said, gently. "If only she had given us the word we could both have gone after her. It's very hard on him to wait, too."

"I've given him a tonic," William said.

"It will do about as much good as one of your bread pills. I'm worried about him, Willy."

"Bread pills have their value," the doctor said, dryly. "I'm worried, too," he added, but he did not say about whom. "If Paul blurts it all out," he thought to himself, "Peter'll go after her, yet!"

Paul had said his brother would never forgive a deception; and William, after a friendship of more than fifty years, knew Peter well enough to think he was right. The idea of the cheated man's anger shaking a death-bed so shocked and alarmed him that he thought uneasily of that "prescription" which Dr. Lavendar said ought to have been given "the next day." "He knew a good deal," William thought, sadly. "I wish I had dared to give Paul the old saint's medicine."

But he did not dare, now, and there was no Dr. Lavendar in Old Chester to give his own medicine for the cure of a soul. All Dr. King could do was to care for Paul's body. A quarrel with Peter would kill him, the doctor thought, and again he urged the failing old man to be silent.

But Paul, yielding and timid and submissive all his harmless life, was, on this one most harmful idea, at the very end of life, immovably courageous. He was entirely alive to the possibilities of his brother's unforgiving anger; as for the possibility of Peter's still carrying out that purpose which Paul's lie had thwarted, "that," the little old brother said, faintly, "isn't any of my business, now."

"Well, anyway, Paul, don't tell him when I'm not around," William entreated. "I must be with Peter."

"Good idea," said old Paul, and drowsed a little.

Outside, the brilliant January day had laid a white finger on the river's thunderous lip, and the house was strangely still. The doctor, sitting at Paul's bedside, thought of the soft, enfolding roar that night when Eunice had slept in frozen stillness and old Paul had damned himself to save Peter's soul. "Greater love hath no man than that," he thought; "I guess Paul is as sure of heaven as Eunice herself!" He looked at the small figure, making a little mound under the comforters, and wished he might slip away in his sleep.

The very-next afternoon when his sleigh came over the creaking snow, and stopped at the Waltons' gate, Peter met him with a haggard face.

"He's sinking, William."

"I was afraid so," said the doctor.

"But he's very anxious to see you. Said he couldn't die before you came, because he promised to do something—I can't quite make out what. He's wandering, I think."

William nodded. "You better wait outside," he told Peter, pausing at Paul's door. But there came a feeble voice from within:

"No; Peter must come in. Willy can wait outside, if anybody does."

So the two men entered together, Peter on noisy tiptoe, and blowing his nose with a great flourish of a red silk handkerchief.

"I'm in a hurry," Paul said, fretfully; "you've kept me waiting, William. Peter, I want to tell you, it wasn't double sixes. It was five and two."

Peter looked at the doctor: "Wandering?"

"No," Paul said, sharply; "I'm not. I cheated you that night. That's all. Now you can go, William, and let me die in peace. He can kill me if he wants to."

Peter, listening, perplexed, agape, suddenly understood. The colour rushed furiously to his face; he lifted his hands, his fingers opening and closing; he said some incoherent, stammering words. Perhaps his mind staggered in this sudden assault upon a fixed and necessary belief. . . . What? She *hadn't* told him to stay? She *hadn't* indicated that it was not safe to follow her? The room whirled around him; he clutched at the bedpost to keep on his feet. . . . He had lost his chance to catch up to her!

Paul looked at him wearily. "I would suggest that you should forgive me," he said. "Of course, if I get well, it needn't hold." But even as he spoke Peter's colour ebbed, and his face calmed, as it used to calm at the old command, "Be still."

"Oh," he said, breathing hard, as though he had been running; "I understand! For a minute I didn't—understand. Eunice made you cheat. I had to lose, so she made you cheat to make me lose? She didn't know she oughtn't to. It was only a game to her; she never understood—honour." He still panted for breath, but he smiled. "You remember, she never understood? To her, a game was just a game. Just amusement. Don't you remember that she couldn't understand why we were so hard on Alex Morgan? Paul, if you see her before I do, tell her I obeyed orders; tell her I'm waiting. But explain to her that that sort of thing really won't do. She mustn't cheat. She really mustn't! Make it clear, Paul."

"Good idea," Paul said, and drowsed into peace.

. . . .

"It's just as the old saint said," William thought, as in the yellow winter sunset he drove across the creaking snow back to Old Chester. "Peter will believe what he has to believe. Paul might as well have told the truth the next day, and spared himself the burden of his poor little lie. It wasn't necessary. And who knows! perhaps Eunice really *did?*"

The Terror of the Government

By PEDRO DE NOVO CALSON

IN THE year 1853 the Señor Caravaco was a worthy and trusted government official of the lesser grade in the Province of X, with an annual salary of six thousand *reales*. He was never known to discuss politics; he eulogized with equal zeal each recurring administration at Madrid. His sole and single preoccupation was to provide for his wife and six children from year to year, hoping for a life-long continuance in the public service. He attended to his duties conscientiously; he had no ambition; his lot was comfortable, and he was contented with his life and friends. But one day he was summoned by his chief, who said to him, not without regret and pity:

"Do you know, Señor Caravaco, that the political situation is changed?"

"Yes, señor."

"And that the new minister of our department is the Count de San Luis?"

"Ah! An excellent gentleman."

"Well, my worthy friend, that excellent gentleman has turned you out. Here is the notification. Believe me, this act grieves me to the soul."

The Señor Caravaco opened his mouth and eyes, turned pale, and dropped his hat.

"Turned out!" he exclaimed. "But surely the Señor Minister does not know that I have a wife and six children."

"Well, that is doubtless so."

"But he shall know it! He shall know it! I shall go at once to Madrid."

And the Señor Caravaco, mightily perturbed, sallied from his office, entered his home, gathered up the mites in his money-box, kissed his half-dozen family buds, and took his seat in the diligence that travelled regularly to the national capital.

The Señor Caravaco had been in Madrid for five or six years during his early manhood, but he no longer knew a single person of political influence there. But that fact disturbed him little. He had faith in his own good cause, and in the belief that his excellency, the minister, would not condemn him to misery.

"The only trouble," he kept saying to himself, "is that these honourable officials have need of long memories, and people don't always like what they most need."

Then our worthy man requested an audience with the Count de San Luis, and got it.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked the count.

"Señor, I am Caravaco, a government official turned out by your administration, with a wife, six children, and long experience. I desire to be reinstated, if your excellency will kindly——"

"I shall endeavour to do so, if it is at all possible," answered the minister, in the consecrated formula used on such occasions. "Leave me a memorandum, and as soon as I can——"

But eight and forty hours slipped by, and there came nothing for the Señor Caravaco. Still, he was a patient man, and the explanation was easy for him:

"It is that wretched memory of the minister, only that!"

In consequence, our good man crossed the courtyard in front of the office of the cabinet minister, stationed himself there like a sentinel, and awaited the arrival of the coach of the man of state. Scarcely had it arrived, when Caravaco darted forward, opened the coach door with one hand, and lifted his hat with the other. The count, alighting, asked him:

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"Señor, I am Caravaco, a government official, turned out by your administration, with a wife, six children, and——"

"Ah yes; I remember. But I have already told you that I will do everything possible."

"Thousand thanks, excellency!"

Certainly we cannot accuse Caravaco of being afflicted with the treacherous memory that troubled the statesman, and as the latter's memory was the only difficulty, since certainly the minister had expressed his good intentions, the discharged official determined to accost him at the door of his own home. He met the great man coming out, and with the same humble attitude as before saluted him and began:

"Señor, I am Caravaco, a government official, turned out by your administration, with a wife, six children, and——"

"Still after me!" exclaimed the other, recognizing him. "There is no necessity to trouble yourself any more, señor."

"Caravaco—Caravaco—Cara——!"

"Well, well, I'll attend to the matter," interrupted the minister, hurrying on.

A few days later the count was taken ill with a heavy cold, and only people with weighty affairs in hand had access to him. But regularly every morning he received, with his newspapers, a card bearing the following:

"*To His Excellency Señor Presidente del Consejo de Ministeros:*

"I kiss your hand.

"J. Caravaco.

"A government official turned out by your administration, with a wife and six children, who pray for your precious health."

These successive cards did a great deal toward getting the count into a salutary state of warmth, very helpful in bringing about the restoration of his health. But when at last he went out again and found at the door the indefatigable Caravaco felicitating him upon his restored health, his patience gave out, and he said, coldly enough:

"*Señor mio*, I am grateful for so many attentions, but I regret to be compelled now to say definitely that it is not possible to reappoint you." And as the minister's coach whirled away, poor Caravaco murmured:

"I see how it is! The Señor Count has now a good memory, but he lacks a good will. Patience! I shall yet conquer him!"

And it may be said that from that moment Caravaco begun his real campaign. If the minister went to church, there was our man between him and the altar, always formidably visible. If he went to the theatre, either going in or coming out, he was sure to hear:

"Señor, Caravaco, a government official, turned out by your administration, with a wife and six children, and——"

In the House, in the Senate, always he was encountering the eternal Caravaco—first at the entrance, then in the galleries, wildly applauding every eulogy of the existing government. The Count de San Luis had exhausted all the means he could contrive to free himself from these importunities. Neither contempt, nor jest, nor anger, nor threat was efficacious. He was powerless against the perseverance of that phantom of a man, always humble, always supplicating. What could he do with him? he asked himself. Of what crime could he accuse him?

Certain it was, he could not get that devil of an official out of his mind, and in truth, too often he was more preoccupied with the dread of the next encounter than he was with the intricacies of the affairs of state. He got in the habit of mechanically repeating the everlasting name of Caravaco, and the habit so shattered his nerves that whenever he retired he invariably peered beneath his bed, fearful that the dreadful man was hidden there, ready to appear like a ghost and submit his plea. Finally, wearied and desperate, the count took a heroic resolution. That same day, upon alighting from his coach, at the government building, instead of shunning his suitor, he said:

"Follow me. Come to my office."

Caravaco obeyed timidly, and a few moments later found himself standing before the minister, who was seated in an armchair.

"What salary did you receive in your former position?"

"Señor, six thousand *reales*."

"Very well. Now, here, take this written appointment, at a salary of ten thousand *reales*, to a position in the Canary Islands; but I warn you, and I take oath to it, that if twenty-four hours from now you are still in Madrid I will have you sent to prison. And if you dare ever to return I'll have you thrown into a dungeon for life. Now go—go at once!" Caravaco, confused, stupefied, overwhelmed with emotion, could not utter a word. He took the document and vanished like a flash.

From the police the minister learned that Caravaco left Madrid that very afternoon. Then he breathed freely once more.

Eleven years after this event, Narvaes became chief of the cabinet, and Don Luis Gonzalez Brabo, Minister of State. Brabo soon saw himself absolutely compelled to remove some officeholders to make places for his supporters, and in order not to strike blindly—that is to say, not to dismiss friends of his friends—he sent for the Register Book of Recommendations.

"Let us see," he said to the Chief of the Bureau of Appointments, "which among the oldest are least needful to us?"

Upon examination it appeared that just then but one official in his department could, with political benefit, be displaced. It was Caravaco!

"And this Caravaco," asked the minister, "has anybody recommended his retention?"

"No, señor, and if, your excellency, it seems proper——"

"Certainly. man, certainly! Immediately!"

The Chief of the Bureau of Appointments retired and Gonzalez Brabo sought in the Register of Recommendations an explanation of the astonishing phenomenon of an office-holder keeping his place for eleven years. In effect, Caravaco had retained his place from 1853 to 1864, from the administration of Santa Cruz down to and through that of Canovas del Castillo, to and through that of Don Alexandro Mon! How was it that no administration had experienced the harsh necessity of sacrificing the inoffensive Caravaco? The great statesman and man of the world, more curious each moment, leaning over the volume and peering closely at the written page, saw at last some words, now half effaced, scrawled there, in the unquestioned handwriting of Count de San Luis, with a pencil mark after the name of Caravaco. And these were the words he read:

"Woe betide the minister who removes him!"

Gonzalez Brabo gazed for a moment at the gilded ceiling, then looking down he covered with one hand the printed escutcheon of Aragon and Castille, and with the other he wrote this terse and final decree:

"Let him stay!"

To Celia

By SIR CHARLES SEDLEY

NOT, Celia, that I juster am
Or better than the rest;
For I would change each hour like them,
Were not my heart at rest.

But I am tied to very thee
By every thought I have;
Thy face I only care to see,
Thy heart I only crave.

All that in woman is adored
In thy dear self I find;
For the whole sex can but afford
The handsome and the kind.

Why then should I seek further store,
And still make love anew?
When change itself can give no more
'Tis easy to be true.

The Gipsy

Makar Chudra: A Tale of the Steppes

BY MAXIM GORKI

M. Gorki

Translation by J. Sutton-Patterson

A WET and chilly wind carried across the Steppes the melancholy murmur of the waves that beat against the shore and oozed in and out of the low herbage that fronted all the sea-line. Occasionally the wind drove before it a shower of dead and yellowed leaves that fluttered into the camp fire and fanned its flames for a moment, whereupon a sort of almost physical shudder crept over all the darkness that enveloped us, a shudder accompanied with sufficient light to show us to the left the endless Steppes, and to the right the infinite and unending ocean, against the background of which crouched the figure of Makar Chudra, an old gipsy who had been set to watch over the horses of the camp which lay but fifty or sixty yards away from us.

He seemed utterly unconscious of the coldness or strength of the wind that beat against us and tore open his grey cloak, tearing and lashing cruelly at his naked and hairy chest. Now and then he would turn towards me his naked throat and handsome old face, whilst all the time he puffed thoughtfully at his big pipe, blowing clouds of smoke from his mouth and nostrils. His motionless eyes were fixed beyond me on the darkness that enveloped the limitless silences and tragedy of the Steppes. So he lay and talked to me without interruption, making no effort whatsoever to shield himself from the wind or the occasional gusts of rain that accompanied it.

"And so you are coming in with us? That's fine! You have chosen a splendid course, Falcon. We all have to meet our fate. Go about everywhere you can, and when you have seen all there is to see, lie down and die—and that's all!

"Life! Other people?" he continued. "H'm! What affair is it of yours? Are you not then yourself but a little slice of life, a tiny lentil, if you will, in so great a soup? And as for all these other people, they have been living without you and surely they will continue to do so. Do you fancy anybody needs you? You're neither bread nor a staff, why then should anyone need you of all things on earth?

"To learn and to teach, you say? Can you ever learn how to make people happy? No, you can't. You will only become grey after all, and then you will say that it is your life's duty to teach other people. Yes, that of course is very fine, but what are you going to teach them? The people already know all they need. The wise take everything—the fool gets nothing, and so everybody manages to learn for himself. . . .

"Human beings are most ridiculous, crowding themselves into one single ruck and sweating the life out of each other when there is so much room in all the world"—he extended his arm along the wide Steppes—"and they are forever working. What for? For whom? Nobody knows. You behold a man at his plough and you imagine to yourself: First he throws away all his good strength tilling the silly earth by the sweat of his brow, and then he stretches his own corpse in it until he is utterly rotted away. Nothing according to this plan remains of him. He does not reap his own sowing, but dies as he has lived—a blockhead.

"Can it be that he is born for this—to dig in the earth and then to die even before he has had time to prepare his own grave? Has he known freedom? Does he understand all the great and incredible width of the Steppes, the multitudinous murmur of the sea? Is his heart ever gladdened by that sound? H'm! I doubt it—from the very moment of his birth he is a slave and nothing more, for that is his accepted capacity, and so he lives until eventually he dies a slave also. In all his life there is nothing he can do to help himself except to put a rope around his neck, if he ever becomes wise enough for that.

"But as for me—look carefully at me, will you?—I have seen so much in my fifty-odd years that were I to write it down on paper it would fill more than a thousand sacks like the one you've got there. Yes, my friend, and even then there would be some left over, I assure you. I tell you seriously, I'd like you to show me the country to which I have never been. Why, you, poet though you are, haven't heard of all the places I've been to. That's the way to live—wandering, wandering—staying only a very little while in each place, then off. Why not? Just as the day and the night are forever on the go, hunting each other round the earth, I would counsel you to be eternally on the move, away from your foolish thoughts about life, if you don't want to get sick of them. For the more you dream and think about life the less you like it, that's how it always happens. I, too, have had the same experience. Yes, my good Falcon, I've lived through all those miserable hours myself.

"I have been in jail; it was in Galicia, and I had plenty of time to philosophize there, I warrant you. 'What am I in this world for?' I used to ask myself. I would get these thoughts into my head just to break the devilish monotony—for it certainly was monotonous there, in all truth! At such moments my heart was oppressed with longing and terrible grief when I looked through the prison bars at the open countryside and the fields beyond it all. Yes—my heart was squeezed and pressed as in a vice. . . . Yes, Falcon, we live in this world and that is very simply all. Who knows why? Nobody. That is exactly so, I assure you, and after all it is utterly useless to ask. Live and live fully; keep wandering and look about you on all sides, and then you will never long for that which you haven't got, never. At that time I could have strangled myself with my girdle. Yes, Falcon, you see I've been through it all.

"H'm! Once I spoke to a fellow. . . . He was a stern man—one of you, a Russian. He said, 'You ought to live not as you yourself like, but as God has ordained. Only abase yourself at God's feet and he will give you everything you need or ask him for.' And yet this fool himself wore an old suit that was full of tears and great holes. I recommended him to get a new suit with his prayers, whereupon he grew very angry and drove me away with curses. Up to that day he had been preaching forgiveness and love. Therefore, should not he have forgiven me when I offended his pride? There's a teacher for you—they teach you to eat less and they themselves eat ten times a day. Tcha!"

He spat into the fire and became silent, slowly filling his pipe once more. The wind had died down to a soft melancholy wail, the horses stamped and neighed in the darkness, and from some part of the camp floated the sad and beautiful tones of a dirge. The singer was the beautiful Nonka, the daughter of Makar. I recognised the full, round tones of her voice that was always so wonderfully full of subdued longing and dissatisfaction—whether she was singing one of those old songs of the Steppes or merely saying "Good morning!" In her brown, lustreless features you could see the smouldering hauteur of a queen, and her deep and dreaming eyes that were always veiled with the shadow of sadness possessed the power of her charm and the irresistible strength of her almost uncanny attractiveness, together with her vast contempt for all that was not beautiful like herself.

Makar handed the pipe to me.

"Have a smoke! Doesn't the girl sing well? What do you think, hey? How would you like to be loved by a girl like that? You wouldn't? That's fine! You are perfectly correct. Put no trust in women—keep away from them all. To kiss a girl is better and far pleasanter than to smoke my pipe . . . but once you have kissed a woman all that freedom of yours is dead, both your own personal freedom and, what is even more important, the freedom of your heart. You see, my little friend, a woman binds you to her with bonds that can neither be seen nor torn asunder. You give all your soul away and get nothing, not even a rouble, in return.

Take my good advice, beware of women. They are always lying, the snakes. . . . 'I love you more than anything else in all the world,' she says. And yet if you but prick her accidentally with a pin, she is ready to tear your very heart out. I know; God, how well I know! If you listen to me, Falcon, I'll tell you a story. Yes, listen, but, above all, be on your guard so that you may flutter as a free bird all your life.

"There was once upon a time a young gipsy whom men called Zobar, Loyko Zobar. All Hungary and Bohemia and Slavonia together with all the border countries knew him, for in many ways he was a brave lad. There was not a village in the entire land in which there were not at least a dozen people who had sworn a solemn oath to kill him and so be rid of Loyko for good and all. Yet he lived on quite happily. If ever he took a fancy to a horse, he would gallop away with it, even if they had set an army of Cossacks to watch over the beast. H'm, he feared neither God nor Man. And if Satan himself were to array all his hellish troops against him, he would be quite willing and ready to oppose them single-handed, and I haven't the slightest doubt in the world that eventually old Satan's jaw would feel the heavy touch of Zobar's mighty fist.

"And every gipsy knew him also; either by sight or by hearsay. He loved only horses, nothing else, and even these he loved only for a while. One gallop and he was done with them. Yes, that was the sort of man he was, and the money that he got for selling them, anybody who cared might have most willingly. In all his life he had nothing that he was not willing to share with another. Nay, if you had asked him for the very heart out of his breast he would have torn it out for the mere pleasure of being able to do you a favour. He was a man, you see, Falcon.

"You know my Nonka, don't you? Isn't she a queen of a girl? But Radda must not be compared with her, for that would be doing too great an honour to Nonka. Listen, then I will tell you about this Radda. Our band was at that time wandering through Bukowina—it was about ten years ago. Once in the springtime—I remember it as though it happened yesterday—we were resting, myself, Danila, the soldier who had fought with Kossuth, old Nur, and all the others. Radda, Danila's daughter, was along with us too.

"Words cannot describe this Radda. It might be possible perhaps to express all her loveliness by means of a violin, but he alone could do it who knows the violin as he would his own soul.

"Many a brave young heart did she ruin, God, how many! Once a rich old man beheld her. When his glance fell upon her he stopped as if suddenly paralysed. He sat upon his horse and gazed at her, trembling as if he had a great fever. Ah, yes, and he was handsome as the devil on a holiday, this old man; his mantle was embroidered with gold, and each time that the horse stamped with his hoofs, the sabre flashed like lightning at his side. . . . The entire sabre was inlaid with precious stones and the bright blue velvet of his cap was beautiful like a little piece of the summer sky . . . a mighty nobleman he must certainly have been to be so marvellously dressed and accoutred. For a few minutes he gazed and gazed upon Radda, and then at last he said to her: 'Give me a kiss and I will give you a purse full of red gold in return!' She merely turned away—that was all. 'Pardon me,' he called to her, 'even if I have offended you by offering you gold for your little mouth, you will at least favour me with a smile, won't you?' Thus did he humble his pride, flinging a great purse of money at her feet whilst he said it. Yes—a great big purse, brother! But Radda merely kicked it with her foot into the road—that was all.

"'Aha! is that the kind of girl you are?' muttered the nobleman, and, whipping up his horse, soon nothing remained of him but a distant cloud of dust.

"The next day he came again. 'Who is her father?' he cried in a loud voice that resounded throughout all the camp. Danila came. 'Sell me your daughter and set your own price!' But Danila replied: 'This is a custom only amongst gentlemen; they sell everything, from their pigs down to their conscience. But I have fought under Kossuth, and I will not sell anything!' The nobleman flew into a rage and grasped the hilt of his sabre, but just at that moment one of us struck a burning match into the ear of his horse, and the beast rushed away with its rider. . . . We broke up the camp and wandered on. We wandered for two days, and yet he overtook us! 'Hey, you folks,' he said. 'Before you and before God my conscience is clear. Give me this girl for my wife and I will share everything with you. I am a rich man, as you can all see.' He was quivering with excitement and swayed in the saddle as a blade of grass does in the wind.

"'Well, my daughter, speak,' mumbled Danila into his beard.

"'If the daughter of an eagle were to fly of her own free will into a nest of crows, what would she become then?' asked Radda.

"Danila laughed and we all laughed with him.

"'Well spoken, little daughter! Have you heard, your honour? It can't be done! You had better look for a little dove—they are more submissive.'

"And we went on. The nobleman took his cap, threw it on the ground, and then rode madly away. Yes, little brother, he galloped so fast that the very earth shook beneath him as he went. That's the kind of girl she was, Falcon.

"Yes, and one evening we were sitting and listening. Music came across the Steppes, and above everything it was very wonderful music. It set the blood in our veins afire and seemed to be calling us somewhere, to some strange and wonderful place of which we had all dreamt, but to where none of us had ever been. And so we, every one of us, felt that it made us wish either to die or else to live and become the ruler of the whole great world. Yes, that's the kind of music it was, Falcon.

"Slowly it came nearer and nearer. Suddenly a horse steps out of the darkness, and on its back is a man who is playing on a fiddle. When he reached the camp fire he stopped playing, looked carefully at us all, and then smiled.

"'Ah, Zobar, it is you!' cried Danila joyously.

"That, then, was Loyko Zobar! He sat there as a king might have done, his eyes glittered as bright stars and the very sun was mirrored in his laughter, so help me God! To all of us he looked like some wonderful image chiselled out of one piece, both he and his horse. In the light of the glowing logs he seemed to be entirely bathed in blood, and his white teeth shone and glinted when he laughed at us all. May the Gods curse me if even I did not fall in love with him as he sat there, even before he had spoken a single word or noticed that there was such a person as myself upon the face of the earth.

"Yes, Falcon, that's the kind of people we sometimes find in the world! He looks into your eyes and he captures your whole soul. Are you ashamed of it! Ah, no, little friend; on the contrary, you feel vastly proud to have met such a man and had him even look at you for a moment. In a way it is only right that this should be so. If there were much good in the world, people would cease to consider it as being good. That's how it is; but listen to what happened after that.

"Radda spoke up: 'You play beautifully, Loyko. What old and crafty Italian made you this fiddle, with its wonderfully deep tones?'

"Loyko laughed. 'I made it all myself! Not out of wood did I make it, but out of the breast of a wonderful young girl whom I loved very ardently, and the strings are nothing more or less than her heartstrings. Sometimes it is still somewhat false, this fiddle, but when I have the bow in my hand I know how to master it, do you see?'

"We gipsies, as you know, try from the very outset to cloud the eyes of our women in order that they may not set our hearts aflame, but they themselves shall become filled with longing for us. Loyko acted quite otherwise, but I fear that he struck the wrong party. Radda turned away and said, yawning: 'H'm! and yet people have told me that Loyko is wise and cunning. Evidently all these people lied to me!' Saying this, she turned and left us.

"'Aha, my beauty! You have sharp teeth!' exclaimed Loyko with flashing eyes, as he leapt down from his horse. 'Hail, comrades, here I am.'

"'Be our welcome guest, O Eagle!' replied Danila. After our mutual embraces we conversed for a while, and then after a little time we all went to sleep. . . . We slept soundly enough. . . . The next morning we noticed that Zobar had tied a bandage about his head. What was the matter? A horse's hoof had caught him, he told us, and that was all we could learn concerning it.

"H'm! we all knew what kind of horse it was, and we smiled in our beards. Danila also smiled. What? Wasn't Loyko worthy of Radda? Surely it wasn't that! A girl may be as beautiful as the day and yet her soul remains weak, cramped and sordid, and even if you hang a whole sack of gold around her neck she never becomes a trifle the better than she originally was. Yes, little brother, I tell you that is so.

"Thus we lived on and on in this place. Business was good and Zobar remained with us quite willingly. There was a comrade for you, Falcon. Wise as an old man and skilled in everything. Why, he could even read and write Russian and Hungarian. If he merely began to speak—said but a word or two, you felt that you wanted to banish sleep for ever so that you might listen to all he had to say. And he could play—may a thunderbolt strike me dead this very minute if ever the world held another man who could play on a fiddle as Zobar did in those days. When he drew his bow across the strings your heart fluttered like a frightened girl at the first note, and at the second it seemed as if your heart stopped beating altogether. He knew all this, of course he knew; but he would keep on playing and simply smile at us through it all. Now we could hear a long and tearful prayer, now the echo of some old and sad fairy tale about a beautiful princess that lay for years and years in a tower of ivory, and then suddenly, when we were all sad, a lively tune would leap from the bow and jig along so deliciously that even the sun in the sky seemed ready to dance to its lilt. If suddenly when he played he had shouted, 'To arms, comrades!' I feel sure we should all have leapt to our feet and dashed our knives into the heart of the man he indicated. His music, and essentially his great personality, impressed us all. All of us, that is, except Radda, who even went so far as to make sport of him at times. All of us could see that she held Zobar's heart imprisoned. He loved her more than anything on earth, that was easy to see, and he would twist his long moustache and glare at the sky on those days when she was cruel to him. Ah me, poor Zobar! At night he would go far into the Steppes quite alone, and we would hear the wailing voice of his violin as he went through the rocky roads and over the long, coarse grass that covered the plains of that quarter.

"One day we were all sitting together and talking about our business. Our talk was becoming monotonous, and at last Danila spoke up: 'Sing us a song, Zobar. Gladden our hearts with a tune!' The latter cast a glance towards Radda, who lay upon her back not far from us, her wonderful face turned up to the cloudless sky, and then he began to draw his bow. Hereupon the fiddle started to talk as though in reality it was the heart and breast of some young girl! And Loyko sang:

"'Ho! my heart is aflame as I ride
Through the waste of the Steppes so wide.
Like an arrow flies my steed,
Shod with the whirlwind's speed.'

"Radda slowly turned her head, raised herself on her elbow and smiled into Loyko's eyes! His face flushed up like to nothing on earth so much as a sunrise.

"'Heigho! Let us gallop away
From the night to the dawn of the day!
Let us scatter this mantle of mist,
Where the hills by the sunrise are kissed.

"'We will ride with the sun till the night
And spatter the sky with her light.
We will leap into midnight from noon—
And then rest on the curve of the moon.'

"That's the way he sang! Nobody can sing like that nowadays. Radda merely remarked, as though she were spilling water through a sieve: 'I wouldn't fly so high if I were you, Loyko. You are always liable to fall down and catch your pretty nose in a puddle, and then your splendid moustache would get dirty. You had better look out!' Loyko glared at her for a moment, then, mastering his rage, he continued to sing his song:

"'Heigho! and to-morrow will peep
And will find us fast asleep.
And then we will both pass away
In the flaming sun's red spray.'

"'That's what I call a song!' said Danila. 'Never in my life have I heard such a song. May Satan make a pipe out of me this very minute if I'm not telling the truth.' Old Nur stroked his beard and silently shrugged his shoulders. This song of Zobar's had touched all our hearts, it seemed. But Radda was not pleased with it.

"'A fly once made a noise just like that when it wanted the people to imagine that it was an eagle,' she said; and so cruel was the jibe that we all felt as though someone had thrown handfuls of snow over us.

"'Perhaps you would like to taste the whip, Radda,' said her father. But Zobar threw his cap on the ground, and with flashing eyes exclaimed: 'Stops, Danila! A fiery horse needs a bit of steel! I want your consent to marry your daughter!'

"'Well spoken!' smiled Danila. 'Take her, if only you are willing and able!'

"'Very well,' said Loyko, and moved towards Radda. 'Well, my pretty lass, listen to me and don't be so terribly haughty. I have known many of your sisters, yes, many of them, I assure you. But never has one of them fired my heart as you do. Ah, Radda, you have imprisoned my soul. . . . Well, then, what am I to do about it all? Whatever must happen will in all certainty happen. . . . Yes, little white one, there isn't a horse in all the world that can carry you away from yourself! I beg of you to marry me before God, my honour, your father and all these good people here. But beware of interfering with my freedom—

for I am a free man and I must live as I choose!' Hereupon, compressing his lips, he moved towards her, stepping forward to take her. . . . 'Aha,' we said to each other, 'at last Radda has put the bit into the mouth of a true steed of the Steppes'; but suddenly we saw him throw up his hands and fall flat on his back! . . .

"He fell as though struck by a bullet. How in the name of all that was wonderful had it happened? It was Radda herself. She had coiled the whip around his legs and then drawn it sharply towards herself, whereupon Loyko merely fell to the ground.

"And then she herself lay down also and looking smilingly at the sky. We waited to see what Loyko would do. The latter, however, sat on the ground pressing his temples with his hands as though afraid that his head might burst. Then, after a moment or two, he rose and walked quietly off into the Steppes without saying a word to any one of us. Old Nur whispered to me, 'Watch him!' and I crept after Zobar into the Steppes, into the terrible darkness of the night. Yes, that's how it was. Falcon."

Makar shook the ashes out of his pipe and filled it again.

I snuggled down into my cloak and looked at old Makar, with his dried and wrinkled face that was so tanned and burnt by the sun. Sternly and thoughtfully he shook his head, murmuring something I could not hear; and his thick grey moustache trembled in the wind that played through his long hair. To me he resembled an old oak that, although struck by lightning, still stands proud and mighty in its invincible power. All the time the sea and shore murmured interminably together and the wind carried their whispering across the Steppes. Nonka was no longer singing, and the clouds that now covered the sky made the night even more dark and terrible.

"Loyko walked slowly with bowed head and hands lying lax and lifeless. Arriving at the ravine near the river, he sat him down on a rock and moaned. Ah me! so piteously did he moan that my heart bled in sympathy for him and his misery. And yet I did not come near him. Words, mere words, cannot console a man's sufferings when they are of this sort, can they? Yes, he sat like this, all alone and silent, for two hours, for three hours—he sat motionless beside the river.

"Suddenly I saw Radda walking quickly from the camp towards Loyko. I was happy, most wonderfully happy. Radda was a wonderful girl. She approached him, but he did not hear her. She put her hands on his shoulders. Loyko started, took his hands away from his wet face and stared at her. And you should have seen how he leapt to his feet and clutched at the handle of his knife! 'He will kill the girl!' I said to myself, and was just about to run off to the camp for assistance when I heard these words: 'Throw it away or else I will blow your brains out. Do you see this?' and Radda pointed a pistol at Zobar's head. That's the sort of little devil she was, Falcon. 'Now,' thought I, 'they are equally matched. What will happen next, I wonder?'

"'Listen to me!' Radda put the pistol into her belt and continued: 'I have not come to kill you, but to make peace. Throw away that knife!' He threw it away and looked at her darkly. It was wonderful, brother, only that, there is no other word in all the world to describe it but that—wonderful. Here stood two creatures looking at each other like beasts of prey, and yet through it all I knew that they were both such strangely strong and marvellous people. Only the bright moon and I beheld them—nobody else whatever.

"'Now listen to me, Loyko. I love you!' He merely shrugged his shoulders as if he had been bound hand and foot.

"'I have seen many a pleasing lad, but you are better and braver than all the rest. Why, the others would tear off their moustaches at a single glance from me, and willingly fall at my feet if I but asked them to do so. With all they had and brought to me, they failed in every way to please me. I would only have made women of them all. You see, there are very few brave gipsies in the world, ah yes! very few indeed, I assure you, Loyko. None of them have I ever loved before, but now, to-day, I love you. And yet I love my freedom, and this, Loyko, I love more than even you. But without you I cannot live, even as you say you cannot live without me. No, I want you to be mine, heart and soul. Every little piece and inch of you, do you hear?'

"He smiled. 'I hear! My heart is glad to listen to these words. Speak on!'

"'I have this much to say yet, Loyko: Whatever you do, I will compel you to be mine. Therefore, little friend, I would advise you to waste no time, for my kisses and embraces are waiting for you—and most ardent they will be, I tell you, these kisses and embraces of mine, Loyko. In the warmth of my arms you will forget your courageous life, and your beautiful songs that so please the gipsy folk will no longer echo through all the countryside. . . . You will sing only tender love songs to me, Radda—your own lovely Radda. Lose no time, therefore, but do as I say. To-morrow you must submit yourself to me as you would to some superior officer. You will bow down at my feet before the whole camp and kiss my right hand—this one here—and then, yes, then I will become your wife for always after. Your wife and yours only.'

"So that's what this fiend of a girl wanted. It was amazing and ridiculous. Such things had happened certainly in the old days, but those times were dead and buried far away from our times and customs. Also these things happened amongst the Montenegrins, and naturally never amongst the gipsies, who are, and always have been, a far prouder nation in all things on earth. Submission to a woman! Tell me, Falcon, can you imagine such a thing? No, I should think not, indeed. I cannot imagine anything more ridiculous. No, little white friend, not in a thousand years would you or I be able to do it, I am certain. No, sir, never!

"Loyko sprang to his feet and uttered a cry that rang through the whole Steppes; it sounded as though a bullet had just passed through his breast. Radda trembled, but did not seem to lose her nerve.

"'Farewell and until to-morrow, and to-morrow you will do what I tell you. Do you hear, Loyko?'

"'I hear—I will do it!' groaned Zobar, holding his arms out to her. But, as ever, she turned away from him. For a moment he swayed like a tree uprooted by a tempest, then suddenly he fell to the ground, weeping and laughing alternately in a terribly hysterical manner.

"That's the way the beautiful devil tortured the poor fellow. It was with great difficulty that I brought him to his senses.

"I wonder what earthly good it can do Satan or Beelzebub or any other devil when we human beings are plunged in such terrible grief? What pleasure can anything of the sort afford to the Evil One—to hear the heart-rending groans of men and women who love and suffer in a hell like this? What do the philosophers have to say to all this, I wonder? . . .

"I returned to the camp and told the whole history to the old men. For a time they deliberated and then decided to wait and see how all these things would eventually turn out. And this is what happened: As we were all sitting around the camp fire the next evening, Loyko came to us. He looked very thoughtful, his features were terribly emaciated and there were deep black lines under his eyes, which he kept turned towards the ground. Without looking at us, he said: 'Look here, comrades, listen to me. This night I have searched my heart and I find in it no place for my old and usual freedom. Only Radda now lives in it, and nothing else. Here she is, the exquisitely beautiful Radda, young and smiling like a queen. She loves her freedom more than she loves me . . . but I . . . I love her more even than my personal freedom itself, and for that reason I have decided to fall at her feet. This very thing she has commanded me to do, so that you can see how her exquisite beauty has overcome and beaten the great and dauntless Loyko Zobar, who, before he knew Radda, played with women as a hawk plays with a pigeon. After that, however, she will become my wife, fondling me with kisses and embraces, so that I shall no longer trouble to sing to you or have any cares for my lost freedom, that was at other times such a dear and unspeakably precious thing to me! Am I right, Radda?' Raising his eyes, he looked at her sadly for a moment. She said nothing in reply, but nodded her head vigorously and pointed to her feet. All of us looked on in sorrow and amazement, not understanding it at all. We felt that we wanted to go far away, so that of all things we might not see Loyko Zobar falling at the feet of any woman on earth, not even if this woman was Radda herself. I think every one of us was overcome with strange feelings of sorrow, regret, and pity at so sad and terrible a scene.

"'Well?' said Radda to Zobar.

"'Ah, then, do not be so hasty! Surely there's plenty of time for that. You shall have all the glory you want this evening, I promise you,' laughed Loyko, like the clashing of two sword blades—that is just how his laughter sounded, little white Falcon.

"'Well, then, comrades, this is the whole story. What else is there left for me to do? you will ask. This much. It is only necessary for me to find out if my Radda's heart is really as hard as she has already shown it to be. Yes, little friends, that is what I am going to find out now. Pardon me, comrades . . .'

"And before we could realize what he was about to do, Radda was lying on the ground, and in her breast stuck Loyko's crooked knife up to the very hilt in her white and quivering flesh. For a moment we all stood as if paralyzed.

"But Radda drew the knife out of her heart, threw it aside and pushed a lock of her black hair into the already opening wound, smiled and then spoke up clearly and loudly: 'Farewell, Loyko, I knew you would do something like this. I knew it, my man! . . . ' And with these words on her lips she closed her glorious eyes and died.

"Do you understand now what sort of a girl she was, Falcon? What a woman! Matthew and Paul, may I be for ever cursed if she wasn't the very daughter of the Devil himself. Yes, Falcon, yes, indeed.

"'And now, my proud queen,' he cried, 'I will fall at your feet.' So saying, in so loud a voice that it echoed through all the Steppes, he fell at her feet and commenced kissing them madly, did this superhuman Loyko. Ah me, this is terribly true, my little Falcon. We removed our caps and stood around the two in utter silence.

"What do you think of such a story, Falcon, my brave lad?

"At last Nur tried to say, 'We ought to bind him!' but amongst all of us not a hand could be raised to bind Loyko Zobar, and Nur knew it. Danila, however, picked up the knife that Radda had pulled from her heart and stood looking at it for a long time. His lips quivered, it was still wet with Radda's blood, and in shape it was so devilishly hard and crooked. Then, slowly and in utter silence, Danila approached Zobar and plunged the knife into his back, just over his heart. For after all, was he not the father of this Radda, the old soldier Danila?

"'Well done,' said Loyko in a ringing voice, turning towards Danila. Then he sunk down at Radda's side and his soul followed hers out of the world . . . hand in hand, perhaps . . . who can tell us, after all?

"And there before our very eyes lay Radda, her hand with its black lock of hair pressed to her bosom, her wide open eyes turned towards the skies, and at her feet lay the handsome form of Loyko. His hair had fallen over his face and none of us could see his features now.

"We stood lost in deep thought. Old Danila's grey moustache trembled and terrible was the look in his eyes. He turned his gaze towards the sky, but said no word to any of us. All of us were deadly silent, with the fear and clasp of death upon us, except old Nur, who threw himself upon the ground and wept like a child.

"And there was good cause for weeping, Falcon.

"Well, then, God be with you, my friend. Keep going straight ahead and do not turn aside. You will only rot away if you stay in one place. It is I, old Makar, who gives you this rare and valuable advice. That's all, Falcon."

Makar stopped, put his pipe in his tobacco pouch and threw the folds of his cloak across his breast. The rain fell harder than ever now. The waves pounded against the shore with a loud and hollow growl. One after another the horses drew near to the dying fire, looked at us with their big, intelligent eyes and stood round in a straggling circle.

"Hop, hop, ehoi!" Makar called out to them in a friendly voice as he stroked the neck of his favourite animal with the palm of his hard old hand. Turning to me, he said, "It is time to sleep!" Covering his head with the fold of his cloak, he stretched himself out on the ground and was soon fast asleep, in spite of the violence of the wind and the wetness of the earth beneath him.

But I—I had no wish to sleep. I gazed as well as I might through the darkness of the Steppes towards the roaring of the ocean and now and then I could see before me the queenly shape of the dead Radda. She held the hand with the crisp lock of black hair tightly pressed against the little wound, and through her fingers trickled a little stream of blood, red and sinister. The blood ran and ran as I watched it, in little drops that fell with slow regularity, and each drop turned to a star of crimson fire as it reached the earth.

And behind her, very close behind, the brave Loyko Zobar. His face was veiled with his heavy black hair, behind which flowed his great and terrible tears.

The rain fell faster, and intermittently the wind sang a dirge to the sad and strangely wonderful pair—Loyko Zobar and Radda, the daughter of old Danila. For hours I watched them and saw the shadows whirl after each other across the blackness; like two dead leaves in the wind they turned round and round, yet never was the singer Loyko to overtake the great love of his life, Radda.

* * *

Laughter

By JOSEPH ADDISON

J Addison

Ride si sapis.—MARTIAL.
Laugh, if you are wise.

MR. HOBBES, in his discourse of Human Nature, which, in my humble opinion, is much the best of all his works, after some very curious observations upon laughter, concludes thus: "The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly; for men laugh at the follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonour."

According to this author, therefore, when we hear a man laugh excessively, instead of saying he is very merry, we ought to tell him he is very proud. And indeed, if we look into the bottom of this matter, we shall meet with many observations to confirm us in this opinion. Every one laughs at somebody that is in an inferior state of folly to himself. It was formerly the custom for every great house in England to keep a tame fool dressed in petticoats, that the heir of the family might have an opportunity of joking upon him, and diverting himself with his absurdities. For the same reason, idiots are still in request in most of the courts of Germany, where there is not a prince of any great magnificence, who has not two or three dressed, distinguished, undisputed fools in his retinue, whom the rest of the courtiers are always breaking their jests upon.

The Dutch, who are more famous for their industry and application than for wit and humour, hang up in several of their streets what they call the sign of the Gaper; that is, the head of an idiot dressed in a cap and bells, and gaping in a most immoderate manner. This is a standing jest at Amsterdam.

Thus every one diverts himself with some person or other that is below him in point of understanding, and triumphs in the superiority of his genius whilst he has such objects of derision before his eyes. Mr. Dennis has very well expressed this in a couple of humorous lines, which are part of a translation of a satire in Monsieur Boileau:

> Thus one fool lolls his tongue out at another,
> And shakes his empty noddle at his brother.

Mr. Hobbes's reflection gives us the reason why the insignificant people above mentioned are stirrers up of laughter among men of a gross taste; but as the more understanding part of mankind do not find their risibility affected by such ordinary objects, it may be worth the while to examine into the several provocatives of laughter, in men of superior sense and knowledge.

In the first place, I must observe, that there is a set of merry drolls, whom the common people of all countries admire, and seem to love so well, "that they could eat them," according to the old proverb: I mean those circumforaneous wits whom every nation calls by the name of that dish of meat which it loves best: in Holland they are termed Pickled Herrings; in France, Jean Pottages; in Italy, Macaronies; and in Great Britain, Jack Puddings. These merry wags, from whatsoever food they receive their titles, that they may make their audiences laugh, always appear in a fool's coat, and commit such blunders and mistakes in every step they take, and every word they utter, as those who listen to them would be ashamed of.

But this little triumph of the understanding, under the disguise of laughter, is nowhere more visible than in that custom which prevails everywhere among us on the first day of the present month, when everybody takes it into his head to make as many fools as he can. In proportion as there are more follies discovered, so there is more laughter raised on this day than on any other in the whole year. A neighbour of mine, who is a haberdasher by trade, and a very shallow, conceited fellow, makes his boast that for these ten years successively he has not made less than a hundred April fools. My landlady had a falling out with him about a fortnight ago, for sending every one of her children upon some sleeveless errand, as she terms it. Her eldest son went to buy a halfpennyworth of inkle at a shoemaker's; the eldest daughter was despatched half a mile to see a monster; and, in short, the whole family of innocent children made April fools. Nay, my landlady herself did not escape him! This empty fellow has laughed upon these conceits ever since.

This art of wit is well enough, when confined to one day in a twelvemonth; but there is an ingenious tribe of men, sprung up of late years, who are for making April fools every day in the year. These gentlemen are commonly distinguished by the name of Biters—a race of men that are perpetually employed in laughing at those mistakes which are of their own production.

Thus we see, in proportion as one man is more refined than another, he chooses his fool out of a lower or higher class of mankind, or to speak in a more philosophical language, that secret elation or pride of heart, which is generally called laughter, arises in him, from his comparing himself with an object below him, whether it so happens that it be a natural or an artificial fool. It is, indeed, very possible that the persons we laugh at may in the main of their characters be much wiser men than ourselves; but if they would have us laugh at them, they must fall short of us in those respects which stir up this passion.

I am afraid I shall appear too abstracted in my speculations if I show that when a man of wit makes us laugh, it is by betraying some oddness or infirmity in his own character, or in the representation which he makes of others; and that when we laugh at a brute, or even at an inanimate thing, it is at some action or incident that bears a remote analogy to any blunder or absurdity in reasonable creatures.

But to come into common life: I shall pass by the consideration of those stage coxcombs that are able to shake a whole audience, and take notice of a particular sort of men who are such provokers of mirth in conversation that it is impossible for a club or merry meeting to subsist without them; I mean those honest gentlemen that are always exposed to the wit and raillery of their well-wishers and companions; that are pelted by men, women, and children, friends and foes, and, in a word, stand as butts in conversation for every one to shoot at that pleases. I know several of these butts who are men of wit and sense, though by some odd turn of humour, some unlucky cast in their person or behaviour, they have always the misfortune to make the company merry. The truth of it is, a man is not qualified for a butt who has not a good deal of wit and vivacity, even in the ridiculous side of his character. A stupid butt is only fit for the conversation of ordinary people: men of wit require one that will give them play, and bestir himself in the absurd part of his behaviour. A butt with these accomplishments frequently gets the laugh of his side, and turns the ridicule upon him that attacks him. Sir John Falstaff was a hero of this species, and gives a good description of himself in his capacity of a butt, after the following manner: "Men of all sorts," says that merry knight, "take a pride to gird at me. The brain of man is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men."

◆

HAD I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

—W. B. YEATS

Zenobia's Infidelity

By H. C. BUNNER

Yours very truly
H. C. Bunner

DR. TIBBITT stood on the porch of Mrs. Pennypepper's boarding-house and looked up and down the deserted Main Street of Sagawaug with a contented smile, the while he buttoned his driving-gloves. The little doctor had good cause to be content with himself and with everything else—with his growing practice, with his comfortable boarding-house, with his own good looks, with his neat attire, and with the world in general. He could not but be content with Sagawaug, for there never was a prettier country town. The Doctor looked across the street and picked out the very house that he proposed to buy when the one remaining desire of his soul was gratified. It was a house with a hip-roof and with a long garden running down to the river.

There was no one in the house to-day, but there was no one in any of the houses. Not even a pair of round bare arms was visible among the clothes that waved in the August breeze in every back-yard. It was Circus Day in Sagawaug.

The Doctor was climbing into his gig when a yell startled him. A freckled boy with saucer eyes dashed around the corner.

"Doctor!" he gasped, "come quick! The circus got a-fire an' the trick elephant's most roasted!"

"Don't be silly, Johnny" said the Doctor, reprovingly.

"Hope to die—Honest Injun—cross my breast!" said the boy. The Doctor knew the sacredness of this juvenile oath.

"Get in here with me," he said, "and if I find you're trying to be funny, I'll drop you in the river."

As they drove toward the outskirts of the town, Johnny told his tale.

"Now," he began, "the folks was all out of the tent after the show was over, and one of the circus men, he went to the oil-barrel in the green wagon with Dan'l in the Lion's Den onto the outside of it, an' he took in a candle an' left it there, and fust thing the barrel busted, an' he wasn't hurted a bit, but the trick elephant she was burned awful, an' the ring-tailed baboon, he was so scared he had a fit. Say, did you know baboons had fits?"

When they reached the circus-grounds, they found a crowd around a small side-show tent. A strong odor of burnt leather confirmed Johnny's story. Dr. Tibbitt pushed his way through the throng, and gazed upon the huge beast, lying on her side on the grass, her broad shoulder charred and quivering. Her bulk expanded and contracted with spasms of agony, and from time to time she uttered a moaning sound. On her head was a structure of red cloth, about the size of a bushel-basket, apparently intended to look like a British soldier's forage-cap. This was secured by a strap that went under her chin—if an elephant has a chin. This scarlet cheesebox every now and then slipped down over her eye, and the faithful animal patiently, in all her anguish, adjusted it with her prehensile trunk.

By her side stood her keeper and the proprietor of the show, a large man with a dyed moustache, a wrinkled face, and hair oiled and frizzed. These two bewailed their loss alternately.

"The boss elephant in the business!" cried the showman. "Barnum never had no trick elephant like Zenobia. And them lynes and Dan'l was painted in new before I took the road this season. Oh, there's been a hoodoo on me since I showed ag'inst the Sunday-school picnic!"

"That there elephant's been like my own child," groaned the keeper, "or my own wife, I may say. I've slep' alongside of her every night for fourteen damn years."

The Doctor had been carefully examining his patient.

"If there is any analogy—" he began.

"Neuralogy!" snorted the indignant showman; "'tain't neuralogy, you jay pill-box, she's *cooked!*"

"If there is any analogy," repeated Dr. Tibbitt, flushing a little, "between her case and that of a human being, I think I can save your elephant. Get me a barrel of linseed oil, and drive these people away."

The Doctor's orders were obeyed with eager submission. He took off his coat, and went to work. He had never doctored an elephant, and the job interested him. At the end of an hour, Zenobia's sufferings were somewhat alleviated. She lay on her side, chained tightly to the ground, and swaddled in bandages. Her groans had ceased.

"I'll call to-morrow at noon," said the Doctor—"good gracious, what's that?" Zenobia's trunk was playing around his waistband.

"She wants to shake hands with you," her keeper explained. "She's a lady, she is, and she knows you done her good."

"I'd rather not have anything of the sort," said the Doctor, decisively.

When Dr. Tibbitt called at twelve on the morrow, he found Zenobia's tent neatly roped in, an amphitheatre of circus-benches constructed around her, and this amphitheatre packed with people.

"Got a quarter apiece from them jays," whispered the showman, "jest to see you dress them wounds." Subsequently the showman relieved his mind to a casual acquaintance. "He's got a heart like a gun-flint, that doctor," he said; "made me turn out every one of them jays and give 'em their money back before he'd lay a hand to Zenobia."

But if the Doctor suppressed the clinic, neither he nor the showman suffered. From dawn till dusk people came from miles around to stare a quarter's worth at the burnt elephant. Once in a while, as a rare treat, the keeper lifted a corner of her bandages, and revealed the seared flesh. The show went off in a day or two, leaving Zenobia to recover at leisure; and as it wandered westward, it did an increased business simply because it had had a burnt trick elephant. Such, dear friends, is the human mind.

The Doctor fared even better. The fame of his new case spread far and wide. People seemed to think that if he could cure an elephant he could cure anything. He was called into consultation in neighboring towns. Women in robust health imagined ailments, so as to send for him and ask him shuddering questions about "that *wretched* animal." The trustees of the orphan-asylum made him staff-physician—in his case the Doctor thought he could trace a connection of ideas, in which children and a circus were naturally associated. And the local newspaper called him a *savant.*

He called every day upon Zenobia, who greeted him with trumpetings of joyful welcome. She also desired to shake hands with him, and her keeper had to sit on her head and hold her trunk to repress the familiarity. In two weeks she was cured, except for extensive and permanent scars, and she waited only for a favorable opportunity to rejoin the circus.

The Doctor had got his fee in advance.

* * *

Upon a sunny afternoon in the last of August, Dr. Tibbitt jogged slowly toward Sagawaug in his neat little gig. He had been to Pelion, the next town, to call upon Miss Minetta Bunker, the young lady whom he desired to install in the house with the garden running down to the river. He had found her starting out for a drive in Tom Matson's dog-cart. Now, the Doctor feared no foe, in medicine or in love; but when a young woman is inscrutable as to the state of her affections, when the richest young man in the county is devoting himself to her, and when the young lady's mother is backing the rich man, a young country doctor may well feel perplexed and anxious over his chance of the prize.

The Doctor was so troubled, indeed, that he paid no heed to a heavy, repeated thud behind him on the macadamized road. His gentle little mare heard it, though, and began to curvet and prance. The Doctor was pulling her in, and calming her with a "Soo—Soo—down, girl, down!" when he interrupted himself to shout:

"Great Cæsar! get off me!"

Something like a yard of rubber hose had come in through the side of the buggy, and was rubbing itself against his face. He looked around, and the cold sweat stood out on him as he saw Zenobia, her chain dragging from her hind foot, her red cap a-cock on her head, trotting along by the side of his vehicle, snorting with joy, and evidently bent on lavishing her pliant, serpentine, but leathery, caresses upon his person.

His fear vanished in a moment. The animal's intentions were certainly pacific, to put it mildly. He reflected that if he could keep his horse ahead of her, he could toll her around the block and back toward her tent. He had hardly guessed, as yet, the depth of the impression which he had made upon Zenobia's heart, which must have been a large organ, if the size of her ears was any indication—according to the popular theory.

He was on the very edge of the town, and his road took him by a house where he had a new and highly valued patient, the young wife of old Deacon Burgee. Her malady being of a nature that permitted it, Mrs. Burgee was in the habit of sitting at her window when the Doctor made his rounds, and indicating the satisfactory state of her health by a bow and a smile. On this occasion she fled from the window with a shriek. Her mother, a formidable old lady under a red false-front, came to the window, shrieked likewise, and slammed down the sash.

The Doctor tolled his elephant around the block without further misadventure, and they started up the road toward Zenobia's tent, Zenobia caressing her benefactor while shudders of antipathy ran over his frame. In a few minutes the keeper hove in sight. Zenobia saw him first, blew a shrill blast on her trumpet, close to the Doctor's ear, bolted through a snake-fence, lumbered across a turnip-field, and disappeared in a patch of woods, leaving the Doctor to quiet his excited horse and to face the keeper, who advanced with rage in his eye.

"What do you mean, you cuss," he began, "weaning a man's elephant's affections away from him? You ain't got no more morals than a Turk, you ain't. That elephant an' me has been side-partners for fourteen years, an' here you come between us."

"I don't want your confounded elephant," roared the Doctor; "why don't you keep it chained up?"

"She busted her chain to git after you," replied the keeper. "Oh, I seen you two lally-gaggin' all along the road. I knowed you wa'n't no good the first time I set eyes on yer, a-sayin' hoodoo words over the poor dumb beast."

The Doctor resolved to banish "analogy" from his vocabulary.

* * *

The next morning, about four o'clock, Dr. Tibbitt awoke with a troubled mind. He had driven home after midnight from a late call, and he had had an uneasy fancy that he saw a great shadowy bulk ambling along in the mist-hid fields by the roadside. He jumped out of bed and went to the window. Below him, completely covering Mrs. Pennypepper's nasturtium bed, her prehensile trunk ravaging the early chrysanthemums, stood Zenobia, swaying to and fro, the dew glistening on her seamed sides beneath the early morning sunlight. The Doctor hastily dressed himself and slipped downstairs and out, to meet this Frankenstein's monster of affection.

There was but one thing to do. Zenobia would follow him wherever he went—she rushed madly through Mrs. Pennypepper's roses to greet him—and his only course was to lead her out of the town before people began to get up, and to detain her in some remote meadow until he could get her keeper to come for her and secure her by force or stratagem. He set off by the least frequented streets, and he experienced a pang of horror as he remembered that his way led him past the house of his one professional rival in Sagawaug. Suppose Dr. Pettengill should be coming home or going out as he passed!

He did not meet Dr. Pettengill. He did meet Deacon Burgee, who stared at him with more of rage than of amazement in his wrinkled countenance. The Deacon was carrying a large bundle of embroidered linen and flannel that must have been tied up in a hurry.

"Good morning, Deacon," the Doctor hailed him, with as much ease of manner as he could assume. "How's Mrs. Burgee?"

"She's doin' fust rate, no thanks to no circus doctors!" snorted the Deacon. "An' if you want to know anything further concernin' her health, you ask Dr. Pettengill. *He's* got more sense than to go trailin' around the streets with a parboiled elephant behind him, a-frightening women-folks a hull month afore the'r time."

"Why, Deacon!" cried the Doctor, "what—what is it?"

"It's a boy," responded the Deacon sternly; "and it's God's own mercy that 'twa'n't born with a trunk and a tail."

* * *

The Doctor found a secluded pasture, near the woods that encircled the town, and there he sat him down, in the corner of a snake-fence, to wait until some farmer or market-gardener should pass by, to carry his message to the keeper. He had another message to send, too. He had several cases that must be attended to at once. Unless he could get away from his pachydermatous familiar, Pettengill must care for his cases that morning. It was hard—but what was he to do?

Zenobia stood by his side, dividing her attention between the caresses she bestowed on him and the care she was obliged to take of her red cap, which was not tightly strapped on, and slipped in various directions at every movement of her gigantic head. She was unmistakably happy. From time to time she trumpeted cheerily. She plucked up tufts of grass, and offered them to the Doctor. He refused them, and she ate them herself. Once he took a daisy from her, absentmindedly, and she was so greatly pleased that she smashed his hat in her endeavors to pet him. The Doctor was a kind-hearted man. He had to admit that Zenobia meant well. He patted her trunk, and made matters worse. Her elephantine ecstasy came near being the death of him.

Still the farmer came not, nor the market-gardener. Dr. Tibbitt began to believe that he had chosen a meadow that was *too* secluded. At last two boys appeared. After they had stared at him and at Zenobia for half an hour, one of them agreed to produce Dr. Pettengill and Zenobia's keeper for fifty cents. Dr. Pettengill was the first to arrive. He refused to come nearer than the furthest limit of the pasture.

"Hello, Doctor," he called out, "hear you've been seeing elephants. Want me to take your cases? Guess I can. Got a half-hour free. Brought some bromide down for you, if you'd like to try it."

To judge from his face, Zenobia was invisible. But his presence alarmed that sensitive animal. She crowded up close to the fence, and every time she flicked her skin to shake off the flies she endangered the equilibrium of the Doctor, who was sitting on the top rail, for dignity's sake. He shouted his directions to his colleague, who shouted back professional criticisms.

"Salicylate of soda for that old woman? What's the matter with salicylate of cinchonidia? Don't want to kill her before you get out of this swamp, do you?"

Dr. Tibbitt was not a profane man; but at this moment he could not restrain himself. "*Damn you!*" he said, with such vigour that the elephant gave a convulsive start. The Doctor felt his seat depart from under him—he was going—going into space for a brief moment, and then he scrambled up out of the soft mud of the cow-wallow back of the fence on which he had been sitting. Zenobia had backed against the fence.

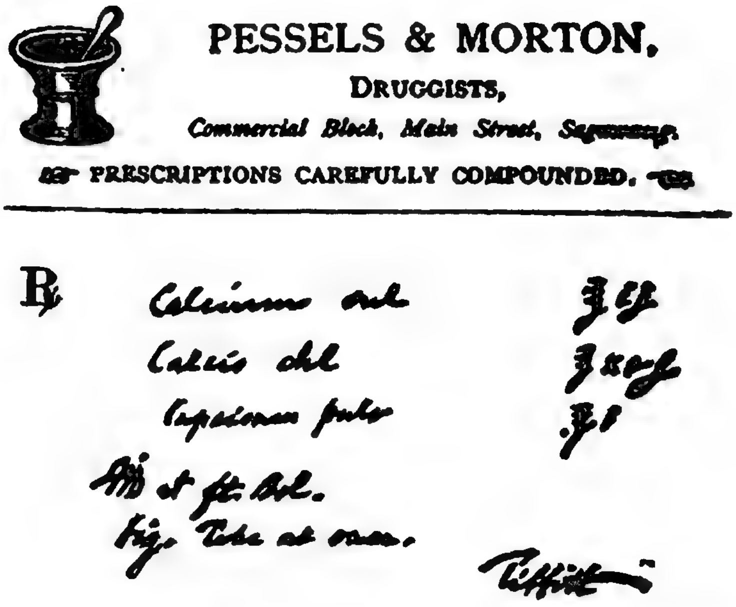
The keeper arrived soon after. He had only reached the meadow when Zenobia lifted her trunk in the air, emitted a mirthful toot, and struck out for the woods with the picturesque and cumbersome gallop of a mastodon pup.

"Dern *you*," said the keeper to Dr. Tibbitt, who was trying to fasten his collar, which had broken loose in his fall; "if the boys was here, and I hollered 'Hey Rube!'—there wouldn't be enough left of yer to spread a plaster fer a baby's bile!"

The Doctor made himself look as decent as the situation allowed, and then he marched toward the town with the light of a firm resolve illuminating his face. The literature of his childhood had come to his aid. He remembered the unkind tailor who pricked the elephant's trunk. It seemed to him that the tailor was a rather good fellow.

"If that elephant's disease is gratitude," thought the Doctor, "I'll give her an antidote."

He went to the drug-store, and, as he went, he pulled out a blank pad and wrote down a prescription, from mere force of habit. It read thus:



PESSELS & MORTON,
DRUGGISTS,
Commercial Block, Main Street, Sagawaug.
PRESCRIPTIONS CAREFULLY COMPOUNDED.

℞ Calcium sul. ʒ ij
Calcis chl. ʒ xvj
Capsicum pulv. ʒ j
M. et ft. bol.
Sig. Take at once.
Tibbitt

When the druggist looked at it, he was taken short of breath.

"What's this?" he asked—"a bombshell?"

"Put it up," said the Doctor, "and don't talk so much." He lingered nervously on the druggist's steps, looking up and down the street. He had sent a boy to order the stable-man to harness his gig. By-and-by, the druggist put his head out of the door.

"I've got some asafœtida pills," he said, "that are kind o' tired, and half a pound of whale-oil soap that's higher 'n Haman—"

"Put 'em in!" said the Doctor, grimly, as he saw Zenobia coming in sight far down the street.

She came up while the Doctor was waiting for the bolus. Twenty-three boys were watching them, although it was only seven o'clock in the morning.

"Down, Zenobia!" said the Doctor, thoughtlessly, as he might have addressed a dog. He was talking with the druggist, and Zenobia was patting his ear with her trunk. Zenobia sank to her knees. The Doctor did not notice her. She folded her trunk about him, lifted him to her back, rose, with a heave and a sway, to her feet, and started up the road. The boys cheered. The Doctor got off on the end of an elm-branch. His descent was watched from nineteen second-story windows.

His gig came to meet him at last, and he entered it and drove rapidly out of town, with Zenobia trotting contentedly behind him. As soon as he had passed Deacon Burgee's house, he drew rein, and Zenobia approached, while his perspiring mare stood on her hind legs.

"Zenobia—pill!" said the Doctor.

As she had often done in her late illness, Zenobia opened her mouth at the word of command, and swallowed the infernal bolus. Then they started up again, and the Doctor headed for Zenobia's tent.

But Zenobia's pace was sluggish. She had been dodging about the woods for two nights, and she was tired. When the Doctor whipped up, she seized the buggy by any convenient projection, and held it back. This damaged the buggy and frightened the horse; but it accomplished Zenobia's end. It was eleven o'clock before Jake Bumgardner's "Half-Way House" loomed up white, afar down the dusty road, and the Doctor knew that his round-about way had at length brought him near to the field where the circus-tent had been pitched.

He drove on with a lighter heart in his bosom. He had not heard Zenobia behind him for some time. He did not know what had become of her, or what she was doing, but he learned later.

The Doctor had compounded a pill well calculated to upset Zenobia's stomach. That it would likewise give her a consuming thirst he had not considered. But chemistry was doing its duty without regard to him. A thirst like a furnace burned within Zenobia. Capsicum and chloride of lime were doing their work. She gasped and groaned. She searched for water. She filled her trunk at a wayside trough and poured the contents into her mouth. Then she sucked up a puddle or two. Then she came to Bumgardner's, where a dozen kegs of lager-beer and a keg of what passed at Bumgardner's for gin stood on the sidewalk. Zenobia's circus experience had taught her what a water-barrel meant. She applied her knowledge. With her fore-foot she deftly staved in the head of one keg after another, and with her trunk she drew up the beer and the gin, and delivered them to her stomach. If you think her taste at fault, remember the bolus.

Bumgardner rushed out and assailed her with a bung-starter. She turned upon him and squirted lager-beer over him until he was covered with an iridescent lather of foam from head to foot. Then she finished the kegs and went on her way, to overtake the Doctor.

* * *

The Doctor was speeding his mare merrily along, grateful for even a momentary relief from Zenobia's attentions, when, at one and the same time, he heard a heavy, uncertain thumping on the road behind him, and the quick patter of a trotter's hoofs on the road ahead of him. He glanced behind him first, and saw Zenobia. She swayed from side to side, more than was her wont. Her red cap was far down over her left eye. Her aspect was rakish, and her gait was unsteady. The Doctor did not know it, but Zenobia was drunk.

Zenobia was sick, but intoxication dominated her sickness. Even sulphide of calcium withdrew courteously before the might of beer and gin. Rocking from side to side, reeling across the road and back, trumpeting in imbecile inexpressive tones, Zenobia advanced.

The Doctor looked forward. Tom Matson sat in his dog-cart, with Miss Bunker by his side. His horse had caught sight of Zenobia, and he was rearing high in air, and whinnying in terror. Before Tom could pull him down, he made a sudden break, overturned the dog-cart, and flung Tom and Miss Minetta Bunker on a bank by the side of the road. It was a soft bank, well-grown with mint and stinging-nettles, just above a creek. Tom had scarce landed before he was up and off, running hard across the fields.

Miss Minetta rose and looked at him with fire in her eyes.

"Well!" she said aloud; "I'd like Mother to see you *now!*"

The Doctor had jumped out of his gig and let his little mare go galloping up the road. He had his arm about Miss Minetta's waist when he turned to face his familiar demon—which may have accounted for the pluck in his face.

But Zenobia was a hundred yards down the road, and she was utterly incapable of getting any further. She trumpeted once or twice, then she wavered like a reed in the wind; her legs weakened under her and she sank on her side. Her red cap had slipped down, and she picked it up with her trunk, broke its band in a reckless swing that resembled the wave of jovial farewell, gave one titanic hiccup, and fell asleep by the roadside.

* * *

An hour later, Dr. Tibbitt was driving toward Pelion, with Miss Bunker by his side. His horse had been stopped at the toll-gate. He was driving with one hand. Perhaps he needed the other to show how they could have a summer-house in the garden that ran down to the river.

* * *

But it was evening when Zenobia awoke to find her keeper sitting on her head. He jabbed a cotton-hook firmly and decisively into her ear, and led her homeward down the road lit by the golden sunset. That was the end of Zenobia's infidelity.

Widow Malone

By CHARLES LEVER

Did you hear of the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
Who lived in the town of Athlone?
Ohone!
Oh, she melted the hearts
Of the swains in them parts,
So lovely the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
So lovely the Widow Malone.

Of lovers she had a full score,
Or more,
And fortunes they all had galore,
in store;
From the minister down
To the clerk of the Crown,
All were courting the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
All were courting the Widow Malone.

But so modest was Mistress Malone,
'Twas known,
That no one could see her alone,
Ohone!
Let them ogle and sigh,
They could ne'er catch her eye,
So bashful the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
So bashful the Widow Malone.

Till one Mister O'Brien, from Clare,—
How quare!
It's little for blushing they care
Down there,
Put his arm round her waist—
Gave ten kisses at laste—
"Oh," says he, "you're my Molly Malone,
My own!"
"Oh," says he, "you're my Molly Malone."

And the widow they all thought so shy,
My eye!
Ne'er thought of a simper or sigh,
For why?
But "Lucius," says she,
"Since you've now made so free,
You may marry your Mary Malone,
Ohone!
You may Marry your Mary Malone."

There's a moral contained in my song,
Not wrong,
And one comfort, it's not very long,
But strong,—
If for widows you die,
Learn to kiss, not to sigh,
For they're all like sweet Mistress Malone.
Ohone!
Oh, they're all like sweet Mistress Malone.

The Sous-Préfet Afield

By ALPHONSE DAUDET

Alph. Daudet

MONSIEUR the sous-Préfet is on his rounds. With coachman before and lackey behind, the barouche of the sous-préfecture carries him majestically to the agricultural fair of the Combe-aux-Fées. For that memorable day Monsieur the sous-Préfet has put on his best embroidered coat, his little cocked hat, his tight-fitting breeches with silver bands, and his gala sword with hilt of mother-of-pearl. Upon his lap lies a great portfolio of embossed shagreen, upon which he gazes sadly.

Monsieur the sous-Préfet gazes sadly on his portfolio of embossed shagreen; he is thinking of the famous speech which he will have to make presently before the citizens of the Combe-aux-Fées. But although he twists the blond silk of his whiskers, and repeats, twenty times over, "*Messieurs et chers administrés,*" the rest of the speech does not come.

The rest of the speech does not come. It is so hot in the barouche! As far as the eye can reach, the road of the Combe-aux-Fées powders under the sun of the South. The air is scorching, and in the elms that border the road, all covered with white dust, thousands of cicadas answer one another from tree to tree. Suddenly Monsieur the sous-Préfet gives a start. Over there, at the foot of a slope, he has just perceived a little wood of green oaks that somehow holds his gaze.

The little wood of green oaks seems to beckon to him.

"Come this way, Monsieur the sous-Préfet, to compose your speech; you will be much more comfortable under my trees."

Monsieur the sous-Préfet is tempted. He jumps from his barouche, and tells his servants to wait for him; that he is going to compose his speech in the little wood of green oaks.

In the little wood of green oaks there are birds, violets, and springs under the tender grass. As soon as they saw Monsieur the sous-Préfet, with his fine breeches and his portfolio of embossed shagreen, the birds felt frightened and stopped singing, the springs no longer dared to make any noise, and the violets hid themselves in the sward. That little world had never seen a sous-préfet, and asks itself, in low tones, who that fine seigneur was who walked about in silver breeches.

In low tones, under the leafage, they ask themselves who that fine seigneur is in silver breeches. Meanwhile Monsieur the sous-Préfet, delighted with the silence and the coolness of the wood, lifts his coat-tails, deposits his cocked hat on the grass, and sits in the moss at the foot of a young oak. Then he opens on his knees his great portfolio of embossed shagreen, and takes from it a large sheet of official foolscap.

"He is an artist," says a warbler.

"No," says a bullfinch, "he is not an artist, since he wears silver breeches; he is rather a prince."

"He is rather a prince," says the bullfinch.

"Neither an artist nor a prince," interrupts an old nightingale, who has sung for a whole season in the gardens of the sous-préfecture; "I know what he is; he is a sous-préfet."

And all the little wood goes whispering: "He is a sous-préfet! He is a sous-préfet!"

"How bald he is!" remarks a lark with a great tuft on his head.

The violets ask:

"Is it dangerous?"

"Is it dangerous?" ask the violets.

The old nightingale answers:

"Not at all!"

And upon that assurance the birds recommence to sing, the springs to run, the violets to shed their perfume, as though the gentleman were not there. Unconscious amid all the merry din, Monsieur the sous-Préfet invokes in his heart the Muse of agricultural fairs, and with lifted pencil begins to declaim in ceremonial tones:

"*Messieurs et chers administrés——*"

"*Messieurs et chers administrés,*" says the sous-Préfet, in ceremonial tones.

A burst of laughter interrupts him; he turns around and sees nothing but a fat woodpecker perched upon his cocked hat, who looks at him and laughs. The sous-Préfet shrugs his shoulders and tries to continue his speech; but the woodpecker interrupts him anew, and calls out from afar:

"What is the use?"

"How, what is the use!" says the sous-Préfet, who gets quite red; and chasing away the impudent bird with a gesture, he begins afresh:

"*Messieurs et chers administrés——*"

"*Messieurs et chers administrés,*" begins the sous-Préfet afresh.

But lo! the little violets lift themselves up towards him on the tips of their stems, and softly say:

"Monsieur le sous-Préfet, do you perceive how delicious is our fragrance?"

And the springs make a divine music under the moss, and in the branches over his head many warblers come and sing him their pretty tunes; and all the little wood conspires to prevent him from composing his speech.

All the little wood conspires to prevent him from composing his speech. Monsieur the sous-Préfet, drunk with perfumes, dazed by music, attempts vainly to resist the new charm that invades his being. He leans on his elbows in the grass, unbuttons his fine coat, stammers again twice or thrice:

"*Messieurs et chers administrés . . . Messieurs et chers admi . . . Messieurs et chers . . .*"

Then he sends the *administrés* to the devil, and the Muse of agricultural fairs has now but to veil her face.

Veil thy face, O Muse of agricultural fairs! When, at the end of one hour, the servants of the sous-préfecture, anxious about their master, entered the little wood, they saw a sight that made them recoil with horror. Monsieur the sous-Préfet was lying on his stomach in the grass, as untidy as a bohemian. He had taken off his coat; and while chewing violets, Monsieur the sous-Préfet was composing verses.

* * *

To Lesbia

By SAPPHO

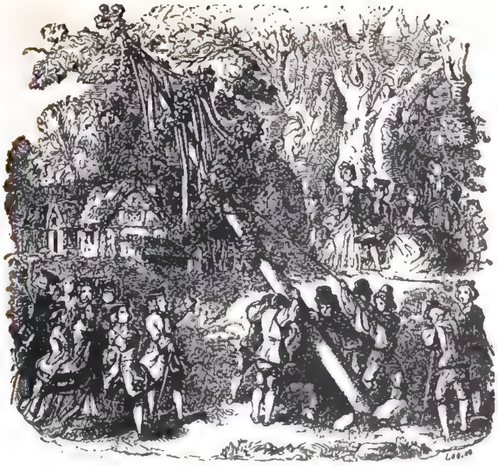
Translated by John Addington Symonds

PEER of gods he seemeth to me, the blissful
Man who sits and gazes at thee before him,
Close beside thee sits, and in silence hears thee
Silverly speaking,

Laughing love's low laughter. Oh this, this only
Stirs the troubled heart in my breast to tremble!
For should I but see thee a little moment,
Straight is my voice hushed;

Yea, my tongue is broken, and through and through me
'Neath the flesh impalpable fire runs tingling;
Nothing see my eyes, and a noise of roaring
Waves in my ear sounds;

Sweat runs down in rivers, a tremor seizes
All my limbs, and paler than grass in autumn,
Caught by pains of menacing death, I falter,
Lost in the love-trance.



May-Day

No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May. SHAKESPEARE.

In spring . . . it was, and still is in many parts of Europe the custom to go out to the woods, cut down a tree and bring it into the village, where it is set up amid general rejoicings; or the people cut branches in the woods, and fasten them on every house. The intention of these customs is to bring home to the village, and to each house, the blessings which the tree-spirit has in its power to bestow. Hence the custom in some places of planting a May-tree before every house, or of carrying the village May-tree from door to door, that every household may receive its share of the blessing. . . .

We can hardly doubt that originally the practice everywhere was to set up a new May-tree every year. As the object of the custom was to bring in the fructifying spirit of vegetation, newly awakened in spring, the end would have been defeated if, instead of a living tree, green and sappy, an old withered one had been erected year after year, or allowed to stand permanently.

J. G. FRAZER.

I sing of *Brooks*, of *Blossoms*, Birds, and *Bowers!*
Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July*-Flowers.
I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*,
Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides*, and of their *Bridall-cakes*.

ROBERT HERRICK.

IN LONDON, 1555

The same day was a goodly May-game at Westminster as has been seen, with giants, morris-pykes, guns and drums, and devils, and three morris-dancers, and bag-pipes and viols, and many disguised, and the lord and lady of the May rode gorgeously, with minstrels divers playing. MACHYN.

IN 1557

The day of May was a jolly May-game in Fenchurch-street with drums and guns and pikes, and the Nine Worthies did ride; and they had speeches every man, and the morris dance and the sultan, and an elephant with the castle, and the sultan and young moors with targets and darts, and the lord and the lady of the May. MACHYN.

HE DIDN'T LIKE THEM

Against May, Whitsunday, or other time, all the yung men and maides, olde men and wives, run gadding over night to the woods, groves, hils, and mountains, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes; and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall. And no mervaile, for there is a great Lord present amongst them, as superintendent and Lord over their pastimes and sportes, namely, Sathan, prince of hel. But the chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus. They have twentie or fortie yoke of Oxen, every Oxe having a sweet nose-gay of flouers placed on the tip of his hornes; and these Oxen drawe home this May-pole (this stinking Ydol, rather) which is covered all over with flouers and hearbs, bound round about with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometimes painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women and children, following it with great devotion. And thus being reared up with handkercheefs and flags hovering on the top, they strawe the ground rounde about, binde green boughes about it, set up sommer haules, bowers, and arbors hard by it; And then fall they to daunce about it, like as the heathen people did at the dedication of the Idols, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself. PHILIP STUBBES (1583).

LOOKING FOR BEAUTY AT THE SOURCE

My wife away to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lie there tonight, and so to gather May dew tomorrow morning, which Mrs. Turner has taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with. SAMUEL PEPYS.

MILK DELIVERY IN SPRING IN 1667

Thence to Westminster; in the way meeting many milk-maids with their garlands upon their pails, dancing with a fiddler before them. SAMUEL PEPYS.

THE LONDON MILKMAIDS

On the 1st of May milkmaids used to borrow silver cups, tankards, etc., to hang them round their milkpails, with the addition of flowers and ribbons, which they carried upon their heads, accompanied by a bagpipe or fiddle, and went from door to door, dancing before the houses of their customers, in order to obtain a small gratuity from each of them.

"In London thirty years ago,
  When pretty milkmaids went about,
It was a goodly sight to see
  Their May-day pageant all drawn out." *Hone's "Every-Day Book."*

May-day customs have nearly died out, but the editor saw a jack-in-the-green, with men dressed as milkmaids dancing round it, on May 1st of the present year (1895) in one of the streets near Primrose Hill. HENRY B. WHEATLEY.

WHAT IRVING SAW IN 1817

I shall never forget the delight I felt on first seeing a May-pole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close by the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river, from the quaint little city of Chester. I had already been carried back into former days by the antiquities of that venerable place; the examination of which is equal to turning over the pages of a black-letter volume, or gazing on the pictures in Froissart. The May-pole on the margin of that poetic stream completed the illusion. My fancy adorned it with wreaths of flowers, and peopled the green bank with all the dancing revelry of May-day. The mere sight of this May-pole gave a glow to my feelings, and spread a charm over the country for the rest of the day; and as I traversed a part of the fair plain of Cheshire, and the beautiful borders of Wales, and looked from among swelling hills, down a long green valley, through which "the Deva wound its wizard stream," my imagination turned all into a perfect Arcadia. . . .

One can readily imagine what a gay scene it must have been in jolly old London, when the doors were decorated with flowering branches, when every hat was decked with hawthorn, and Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian, the morris-dancers, and all the other fantastic masks and revellers, were performing their antics about the May-pole in every part of the city.

I am not a bigoted admirer of old times and old customs merely because of their antiquity; but while I rejoice in the decline of many of the rude usages and coarse amusements of former days, I regret that this innocent and fanciful festival has fallen into disuse. It seemed appropriate to this verdant and pastoral country, and calculated to light up the too pervading gravity of the nation. I value every custom which tends to infuse poetical feeling into the common people, and to sweeten and soften the rudeness of rustic manners, without destroying their simplicity. Indeed, it is to the decline of this happy simplicity that the decline of this custom may be traced; and the rural dance on the green, and the homely May-day pageant, have gradually disappeared, in proportion as the peasantry have become expensive and artificial in their pleasures, and too knowing for simple enjoyment.

Some attempts, the Squire informs me, have been made of late years, by men of both taste and learning, to rally back the popular feeling to these standards of primitive simplicity; but the time has gone by, the feeling has become chilled by habits of gain and traffic; the country apes the manners and amusements of the town, and little is heard of May-day at present, except from the lamentations of authors, who sigh after it from among the brick walls of the city:

"For O, for O, the Hobby Horse is forgot." WASHINGTON IRVING.

THE "EVIL MAY-DAY"

The 28th day of April, 1517, divers yong-men of the citie picked quarrels with certaine *strangers*, as they passed along the streets: some they smote and buffetted, and some they threw in the channell: for which, the lord maior sent some of the Englishmen to prison, as Stephen Studley, Skinner, Stevenson, Bets, and other.

Then suddenly rose a secret rumour, and no man could tell how it began, that on May-day next following, the citie would slay all the aliens: insomuch that divers strangers fled out of the citie.

This rumour came to the knowledge of the kings councell: whereupon the lord cardinall sent for the maior, and other of the councell of the citie, giving them to understand what hee had heard.

The lord maior (as one ignorant of the matter) told the cardinall, that he doubted not so to governe the citie, but as peace should be observed.

The cardinall willed him so to doe, and to take good heed, that if any riotous attempt were intended, he should by good policy prevent it. . . . Whereupon every alderman sent to his ward, that no man (after nine of the clocke) should stir out of his house, but keepe his doores shut, and his servants within, untill nine of the clocke in the morning.

After this commandement was given, in the evening, as sir John Mundy, alderman, came from his ward, hee found two young-men in Cheape, playing at the bucklers, and a great many of young-men looking on them, for the command seemed to be scarcely published; he commanded them to leave off; and because one of them asked him why, hee would have him sent to the counter. But the prentices resisted the alderman, taking the young-man from him, and cryed *Prentices, prentices, clubs, clubs;* then out at every doore came clubs and other weapons, so that the alderman was forced to flight. Then more people arose out of every quarter, and forth came servingmen, watermen, courtiers, and other, so that by eleven of the clocke, there were in Cheape, 6 or 7 hundred, and out of Pauls churchyard came about 300. From all places they gathered together, and brake up the Counter, took out the prisoners, which had been committed thither by the lord maior, for hurting the strangers: also they went to Newgate, and tooke out Studley and Bets, committed thither for the like cause. The maior and sheriffes were present, and made proclamation in the kings name, but nothing was obeyed.

[*After great disorders, the riot was put down, 300 men being made prisoners.* Thirteen prisoners were sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, and one was actually executed. The rest were pardoned when they all together "cryed to the King for mercy."]

The prisoners being dismissed, the gallowes were taken downe, and the citizens tooke more heed to their servants: keeping (for ever after) as on that night, a strong watch in Armour, in remembrance of Evill May-day.

These great Mayings and Maygames made by the governours and masters of this city, with the triumphant setting up of a great shaft (a principall May-pole in Cornehill, before the parish of saint Andrew) therefore called Undershaft, by means of that insurrection of youths, against aliens on May-day, 1517, the 6. of Henry the eighth, have not been so freely used as before. STOW.

SOME MODERN EVIL MAY-DAYS

[The following headings from newspapers give a suggestion of what we had made of the old May festival in the decade preceding the Great War. And yet there are people who say the world does not in every respect advance!]

May 2, 1905.

TROOPS IN WARSAW
SHOOT NEARLY 100

Fire Without Warning at Orderly Procession of Workmen.

May-Day Scenes of Horror.

May 2, 1907

SHOOTS SOLDIERS FROM A PARIS 'BUS

Russian-American Wounds Two Cuirassiers—Crowd Tries to Lynch Him.

20 PERSONS BADLY HURT

Over 1,000 Arrests Result from May-Day Celebration—Police Charge with Drawn Sabres.

May 2, 1909.

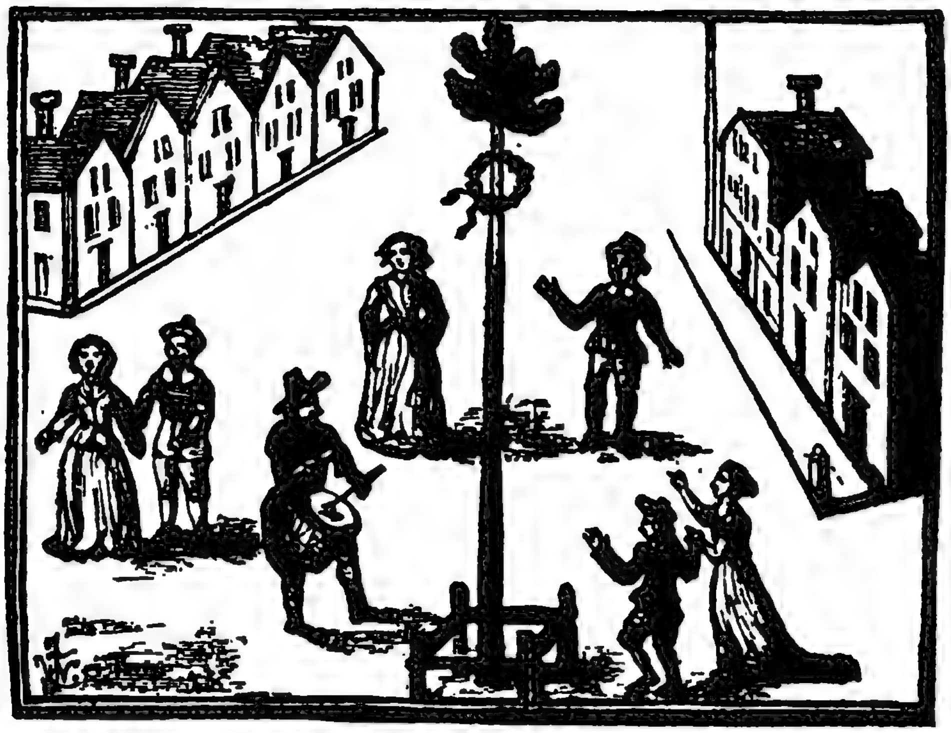
RIOT IN ARGENTINA—12 DEAD

Battle Between Police and May-Day Manifestants in Buenos Ayres.

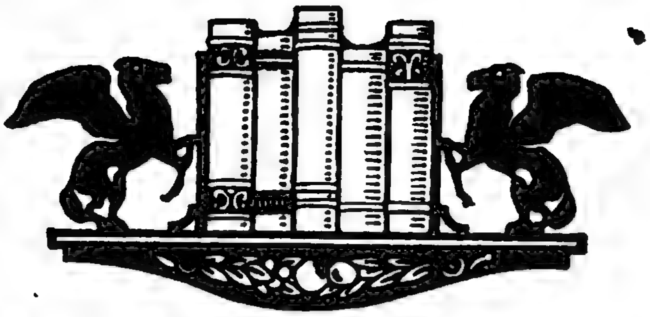
May 2, 1913.

WOUND GERMAN PARADERS.

Police Attack Them,—Thousands of May-Day Marchers in London.



MAY-DAY IN LONDON IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.



Betrayed

Counting on dullness—I found a Living Book

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

ONE of the really beautiful stories in the world is the Abraham Lincoln story. I am told that the poet Sandburg is this year to publish a Lincoln book, but as I sit writing I have not seen his book.

Recently, however, I read a Lincoln—by Nathaniel Wright Stephenson—that seems to me destined to live. It is a beautiful book, beautifully conceived, felt and written.

And what a story is the Lincoln story, the Lincoln myth, if you will! The poor boy of the forests with the long, grotesque body, the slovenly no-account father, the hard-working, crude tobacco-chewing, hog-raising, swearing, fighting people, the mud, the dirt, the vulgarity, always the vulgarity.

The boy escaping by the sheer force of his inner sweetness and patience. War, politics, graft. The man seeking through war, through crowds of scheming men and emerging at last to establish, through the force of his own personality, the greatest American story, a story that has been written many times, that will be written many times.

Let me a little explain my own attitude toward this Lincoln written by Mr. Stephenson, a man of the colleges, an erudite, cultured man. My approach to the book was amusing—at least to me. I am myself a writing man and the writing man—after he becomes a writing man—is rarely a consistent reader. His interest is in people, in life rather than in books and often very dull books are the only ones he reads. Well-written books have to be approached cautiously. There are, for example, certain very beautiful writers I am unable to read at all. Their reaction to life is so much finer and clearer than my own that they fill me with gloom. After all, if I am to go on expressing myself through the written word, I have to find my own way of saying things, of feeling and seeing things. These superlatively apt and skillful fellows get me off my track. I find myself later using their words, feeling through them, getting my own reactions to life all coloured and changed, making something oddly unreal and untrue to myself.

Their books, then, for the most part, I have on the shelves of my library. My wife reads them, and often in the evening we speak of them. Surely I have read them once—I speak so knowingly. Situations are discussed. "Do you remember the scene—the two men in the boat on the dark river—the lights dimly seen in the distance. There was a young girl running in a path through the forest toward the river's edge. Surely that was Balzac at his best."

My wife is aware that I am cheating. She is onto my curves and when I invent scenes, attributing them to Dostoievsky, Hardy, Flaubert, she smiles and lets the matter pass, but when there are guests in for the evening they are often confused.

"But in what story of Balzac's did that scene occur?"

"Do you not remember? It was in a tale of his called 'Night Again.' Surely you remember."

After all I am a writer. Am I to let people know how little I read? Reading and writing are after all linked in people's minds.

. . . .

But let's be honest for a moment. After all what do writers read?

Writers like myself read little except when they are in one of the dreary blank periods, between outbursts of writing, when they are very young, and when they are ill.

I am myself seldom ill, but every now and then I am knocked over by a period of what my friends have learned to call one of my psychic sicknesses. The sickness lasts sometimes for months, often for weeks and occasionally, when I am lucky, a day or two will see me clear and all right again.

The periods, that is to say the times between, have to be got through however, and it is at such times most of my own reading is done. Life has become for the time dull and meaningless, my bones ache, and I look at my fellows with jaundiced eyes, so I escape into books.

Mostly I read histories, biographies of statesmen, of presidents, of generals. Such books are written usually by college professors—who get better jobs, I am told, after writing and publishing a book—by secretaries to the great, by wives and daughters of the great. Mr. Joseph Tumulty writes the Life of President Wilson, a general's wife writes a long book to prove that her husband was not responsible for the loss of the battle of Shiloh during the American Civil War, a successful business man writes a long book to tell how he learned to save pennies. The late World War has already produced a flood of deliciously dull books that will in the future, I am sure, most admirably serve my purpose and cure me of many an illness.

The books will get into the second-hand book stores. I will buy them, two for a quarter, and store them away.

Presently I shall have one of my psychic illnesses and shall spend the time, until I am well again, and do not want to read, in consuming facts. Having found life, as seen through the eyes of these writing men, inconceivably more dull than my own life can ever be, I shall become well again.

. . . .

All of this fanfare, only to speak of a man who has betrayed me. I am being constantly betrayed these days. Something dreadful is happening. Historians, college professors, all such fellows, men who should read Mr. Henry Mencken and remain in the place he has provided for them, that is to say properly dull and commonplace, are writing, many of them, so much better than most of our novelists. It is dreadful. A man like myself hardly knows where to turn.

Recently, during one of my illnesses—of the kind just described—I picked up the story of Abraham Lincoln by Nathaniel Wright Stephenson—a perfectly proper college professor I had been told, expecting of course to be lulled into my normal healthy state of self-complacency by its dullness. Had I not read most of the Lincoln books? Did I not know what to expect?

Throwing myself on a couch I began to read. Pshaw! The deuce! What a betrayal! The book was beautifully written, beautifully imagined. All my life I had been dreaming of writing, sometime, just a certain kind of Lincoln book and here was a man who had made the task impossible to me.

Mr. Stephenson had realized with the quick, sensitive feeling of the artist toward his materials that the true life story of such a man as Lincoln cannot be got at by the old, dull method of piling up facts. Having before him a wonderful story, he told it with warmth and gusto. He had gone at his job as an artist goes at it, by feeling with Lincoln, living in him and with him, putting his fingers with marvellous intuitive certainty on the very heart and soul of the drama in the life of the greatest and finest American figure.

And what had resulted was a book—a very, very fine book.

The Lincoln of Nathaniel Stephenson will, I am sure, live. The Lincoln story—the Lincoln myth, if you will—will surely live, for many hundreds of years and as long as it lives this book should live with it. It has stirred me more deeply than any American book I have read for years.

Surely it will stir many other Americans who, like myself, will be rejoiced to find the whole Lincoln story given a new turn toward greater subtility and understanding.

. . . .

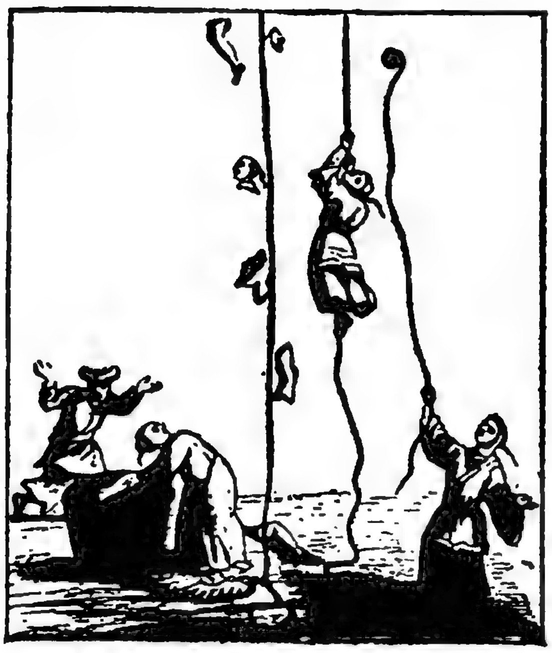
However, I had been betrayed. The book was written by an educated man, and is there not another American myth that says very clearly that educated, cultured men cannot write, that they are dull? In adding so beautifully to the American Lincoln myth, Mr. Stephenson is helping to destroy, rather ruthlessly, another and, to me, very precious myth.

The whole situation, you see, the new turn our historians are taking toward beautiful, imaginative prose, leaves a fellow like myself, who at certain times must have dull books and who has always so depended upon the college professors, with practically no place to turn. Mr. Stephenson's book made the period of psychic illness, during which I read it, one of the most prolonged I ever had to go through. He wrote so well he made me sick. No college professor, no cultured, educated man should be allowed to act that way. It isn't right. No historian has any right to be so charming in prose.

An Eastern Mystery

THE ROPE TRICK

THE most famous and most discussed piece of Eastern "Magic" is the Rope Trick. Some iconoclasts have, of late years, asserted stoutly that it was childish to attempt to explain this performance—because nobody ever really saw it! It is always, they declare, some friend of an acquaintance of the narrator's cousin who had the experience. However, there was a distinguished English orientalist named Sir Henry Yule, who, after twenty-odd years in India, edited "The Book of Ser Marco Polo" (1871-5) and was awarded a gold medal by the Royal Geographic Society for this scholarly work. He gives four statements: an Arab traveller in 1348; the Emperor Jahangir, two centuries later; an Anglo-Dutchman in 1670; and a native, writing to the "Times of India" in 1889. These accounts, at least, seem to offer some first-hand testimony.



WHAT IBN BATULA SAW AT THE COURT OF KHANSA IN 1348

That same night a juggler, who was one of the Kan's slaves, made his appearance, and the Amir said to him, "Come and show us some of your marvels."

Upon this he took a wooden ball, with several holes in it, through which long thongs were passed, and laying hold of one of these, slung it into the air. It went so high that we lost sight of it altogether. (It was the hottest season of the year, and we were outside in the middle of the palace court.) There now remained only a little of the end of a thong in the conjuror's hand, and he desired one of the boys who assisted him to lay hold of it and mount. He did so, climbing by the thong, and we lost sight of him also! The conjuror then called to him three times, but getting no answer, he snatched up a knife as if in a great rage, laid hold of the thong, and disappeared also! By and by he threw down one of the boy's hands, then a foot, then the other hand, and then the other foot, then the trunk, and last of all the head.

Then he came down himself, all puffing and panting, and with his clothes all bloody, kissed the ground before the Amir, and said something to him in Chinese. The Amir gave some order in reply, and our friend then took the lad's limbs, laid them together in their places, and gave a kick, when, presto! there was the boy, who got up and stood before us!

All this astonished me beyond measure, and I had an attack of palpitation like that which overcame me once before in the presence of the Sultan of India, when he showed me something of the same kind. They gave me a cordial, however, which cured the attack.

The Kazi Afkharuddin was next to me, and quoth he, "*Wallah!* 'tis my opinion there has been neither going up nor coming down, neither marring nor mending; 'tis all hocus pocus!"

THE EMPEROR JAHANGIR (SON OF AKBAR) ABOUT 1610

Ninth. They produced a man whom they divided limb from limb, actually severing his head from the body. They scattered these mutilated members along the ground, and in this state they lay for some time. They then extended a sheet or curtain over the spot, and one of the men, putting himself under the sheet, in a few minutes came from below, followed by the individual supposed to have been cut into joints, in perfect health and condition, and one might have safely sworn that he had never received injury or wound whatever.

Twenty-third. They produced a chain of fifty cubits in length, and in my presence threw one end of it towards the sky, where it remained as if fastened to something in the air. A dog was then brought forward, and being placed at the lower end of the chain, immediately ran up, and reaching the other end, immediately disappeared in the air. In the same manner a hog, a panther, a lion, and a tiger, were alternately sent up the chain, and all equally disappeared at the upper end of the chain. At last they took down the chain and put it into a bag, no one even discovering in what way the different animals were made to vanish into the air in the mysterious manner above described. This, I may venture to affirm, was beyond measure strange and surprising.

EDWARD MELTON, AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER IN BATAVIA, 1670

But now I am going to relate a thing which surpasses all belief, and which I should scarcely venture to insert here had it not been witnessed by thousands before my own eyes.

One of the same gang took a ball of cord, and grasping one end of the cord in his hand slung the other up into the air with such force that its extremity was beyond reach of our sight. He then immediately climbed up the cord with indescribable swiftness, and got so high that we could no longer see him. I stood full of astonishment, not conceiving what was to come of this, when lo! a leg came tumbling down out of the air. One of the conjuring company instantly snatched it up, and threw it into the basket whereof I have formerly spoken. A moment later a hand came down, and immediately on that another leg. And in short all the members of the body came thus successively tumbling from the air and were cast together into the basket.

The last fragment of all that we saw tumble down was the head, and no sooner had that touched the ground than he who had snatched up all the limbs and put them in the basket turned them all out again topsy-turvy. Then straightway we saw with these eyes all those limbs creep together again, and, in short, form a whole man, who at once could stand and go just as before, without showing the least damage!

Never in my life was I so astonished as when I beheld this wonderful performance, and I doubted now no longer that these misguided men did it by the help of the Devil. For it seems to me totally impossible that such things should be accomplished by natural means.

A NATIVE HINDU IN 1889

One Siddeshur Mitter, writing to the Calcutta paper (The *Times of India*, quoted by the *Weekly Dispatch*, 15th September, 1889), gives a thrilling account of a conjuror's feat which he witnessed recently in one of the villages of the Hooghly district. He saw the whole thing himself, he tells us, so there need be no question about the facts.

On the particular afternoon when he visited the village the place was occupied by a company of male and female jugglers, armed with bags and boxes and musical instruments, and all the mysterious paraphernalia of the peripatetic *Jadugar*. While Siddeshur was looking on, and in the broad, clear light of the afternoon, a man was shut up in a box, which was then nailed up and bound with cords. Weird spells and incantations of the style we are all familiar with were followed by the breaking open of the box, which, "to the unqualified amazement of everybody, was found to be perfectly empty." All this is much in the usual style; but what followed was so much superior to the ordinary run of modern Indian jugglery that we must give it in the simple Siddeshur's own words. When everyone was satisfied that the man had really disappeared, the principal performer, who did not seem to be at all astonished, told his audience that the vanished man had gone up to the heavens to fight Indra.

"In a few moments," says Siddeshur, "he expressed anxiety at the man's continued absence in the aerial regions, and said that he would go up to see what was the matter. A boy was called, who held upright a long bamboo, up which the man climbed to the top, whereupon we suddenly lost sight of him, and the boy laid the bamboo on the ground.

"Then there fell on the ground before us the different members of a human body, all bloody,—first one hand, then another, a foot, and so on, until complete. The boy then elevated the bamboo, and the principal performer, appearing on the top as suddenly as he had disappeared, came down, and seeming quite disconsolate, said that Indra had killed his friend before he could get there to save him. He then placed the mangled remains in the same box, closed it, and tied it as before.

"Our wonder and astonishment reached their climax when, a few minutes later, on the box being again opened, the man jumped out perfectly hearty and unhurt."

The False Note

No professional humourist has ever succeeded in being quite so funny as the solemn writers are at times unconsciously. Some of the greatest poets, for example, and many others—well, not so great, have had lapses when, instead of arousing emotions of pathos, tragedy or romance, their words have had quite contrary reactions.

Can it be that when one of us humans takes himself over-seriously, the law of compensation begins to act?

Anyhow, it is fairly certain the following were not meant to produce the effects they do produce with most readers. And it is worth while to notice, and smile at, these failures; not only because the smile is good in itself, but as a step toward more real and vital and discriminating appreciation of the best:

When Lisa Lies Sick, Overcome by Her Love for the King

She longed for music: that was natural;
Physicians said it was medicinal.

George Eliot.

"Late Bare Earth, Proud of New Clothing"

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

When Job Was Smitten With Boils

His motion works, and beats the oozy mud,
And with its slime incorporates the flood,
'Till all the encumber'd, thick, fermenting stream
Does like one pot of boiling ointment seem.

Sir Richard Blackmore [1653-1729].

A Superlative

Oh, character! Thou ever art
An holy and an honor'd thing;
More valuable than life itself,
More costly than a diamond ring.

J. Gordon Coogler.

The Thirsty Breast

But Lethe's pure and limpid stream,
Shall calm the thought, from passion's dream,

'Tis there my breast shall seek repose,
And drink "oblivion to its woes." HANNAH COWLEY.

⁂

AN IMPROVEMENT ON MOTHER GOOSE

Little Jack Cable, when at the table,
Tried to be very genteel;
So father and mother and sister and brother
Always enjoyed each meal. WINIFRED SACKVILLE STONER.

⁂

WHEN THE "BLOOMING WOOD-BOY" CALLED FROM THE CAVE

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

⁂

THE SUPREME REWARD OF ENOCH ARDEN'S SELF-SACRIFICE

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral. TENNYSON.

⁂

RUTH AND HER OVER-NATURAL LOVER

When Ruth was left half desolate
Her father took another mate; . . .

There came a youth from Georgia's Shore—
A military casque he wore
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze
And made a gallant crest.

* * * * * *

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

⁂

THE SPANIEL'S GENERALIZING BARK

Moving for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position, she reflected that she should either not have ceased to be right—that is, to be confident—or have recognized that she was wrong; though she tried to deal with herself, for a space, only as a silken water-spaniel who has scrambled out of a pond and who rattles the water from his ears. Her shake of the head, again and again, as she went, was much of that order, and she had resource, to which, save for the rude equivalent of his generalizing bark, the spaniel would have been a stranger, of humming to herself hard as a sign that nothing had happened to her. HENRY JAMES.

Monsieur Lecoq

The Master Detective Makes His Debut

By ÉMILE GABORIAU

CHAPTER XXIII

LONG, narrow, low of ceiling, and pierced by many small, numbered doors, like the corridor of a hotel, its sole furniture an immense oaken desk, blackened by age—such is the *galerie d'instruction* in the Palais de Justice.

Even in the daytime, when it is thronged with prisoners, witnesses, and guards, it is a sad and gloomy place.

But it is sinister of aspect at night, when deserted, and only dimly lighted by the smoking lamp of the doorkeeper, who is waiting for the departure of some judge whom business has detained later than usual.

Although Lecoq was not sensitive to such influences, he made haste to reach the staircase and escape the echo of his own steps, which resounded drearily in the silence and darkness that pervaded the corridor.

On the floor below a window was standing open, and the young man leaned out to ascertain the state of the weather.

The temperature was much milder, the snow had disappeared entirely, and the pavements were almost dry. A slight haze illumined by the red glare of the street-lamps, hung like a purple mantle over the city.

The streets below were gay and animated; carriages were rolling rapidly to and fro, and the pavements were too narrow for the bustling crowd, which, now that the labours of the day were ended, was hastening in pursuit of its pleasures.

This spectacle drew a sigh from the young detective.

"And it is in this great city, in the midst of this world of people that I must discover the traces of an unknown person! Is it possible to do this?"

But this feeling of discouragement did not endure long.

Em. Gaboriau

"Yes, it is possible," cried an inward voice. "Besides, it *must* be done; your future depends upon it. What one will, one can do."

Ten seconds later he was in the street, more than ever inflamed with hope and courage.

To act as the servants of boundless desires, man has, unfortunately, only organs of limited power. The young man had not advanced twenty steps before he realized the fact that his physical powers would not obey the command of his will. His limbs trembled; his head whirled. Nature asserted her rights; for two days and nights Lecoq had taken scarcely a moment's rest, and he had eaten nothing that day.

"Am I going to be ill?" he thought, sinking down upon a bench.

And he groaned inwardly, on recapitulating all that he wished to do that evening.

Must he not (to mention only the most important) ascertain the results of Father Absinthe's search after the man who had recognized one of the victims in the morgue; must he not verify in the hotels which surround the northern depot the assertions made by the prisoner; and last, but not least, must he not procure the address of Polyte Chupin's wife, in order to serve the summons upon her?

Under the power of urgent necessity, he succeeded in triumphing over his weakness, and he rose, murmuring:

"I will go to the prefecture, and to the morgue; then I will see."

But he did not find Father Absinthe at the prefecture, and no one could give any tidings of him. The good man had not made his appearance there at all during the day.

Nor could anyone indicate, even vaguely, the abode of the Widow Chupin's daughter-in-law.

But he met a number of his colleagues, who laughed and jeered at him unmercifully.

"Ah! you are a shrewd one!"—all whom he met said to him—"it seems that you have just made a wonderful discovery! They talk of decorating you with the cross."

Gevrol's influence betrayed itself everywhere. The angry inspector had taken pains to inform each newcomer that this poor Lecoq, crazed by ambition, persisted in declaring that a low, vulgar fugitive from justice was some great personage.

But these jeers had but little effect upon the young man. "He laughs best who laughs last," he muttered.

If he was restless and anxious as he walked up the Quai des Orfèvres, it was only because he could not explain the prolonged absence of Father Absinthe, and because he wondered if Gevrol, in his mad jealousy, would not attempt, in an underhand way, to entangle all the threads of this business still more.

At the morgue, he met with no better success. After ringing three or four times, one of the guard who came to open the door informed him that the bodies had not been identified, and that the old policeman had not been seen since he left there early in the morning.

"This is a bad beginning," thought Lecoq. "I will go and get some dinner—that will, perhaps, change the luck; and I have certainly earned the bottle of good wine to which I intend to treat myself."

It was a happy thought. Some dinner and a couple of glasses of Bordeaux sent new courage and energy coursing through his veins. If he still felt weary, the sensation was greatly diminished when he left the restaurant with a cigar between his lips.

Just at that moment he longed for the carriage and the good horse of Father Papillon. Fortunately, a *fiacre* was passing; he hired it, and as the clock struck eight, he alighted at the square near the Northern depot. He looked about a little first, then he began his search.

It must be understood that he did not present himself in his official capacity. That would be a sure way of learning nothing.

By brushing back his hair and turning up his coat collar, he made a very considerable alteration in his appearance; and it was with a very pronounced English accent that he asked information concerning a "foreign workman."

But vainly he employed all his address in questioning parties; everywhere he received the same response:

"We do not know such a person; we have not seen anyone answering this description."

Any other reply would have astonished Lecoq, so strongly persuaded was he that the prisoner had only related this incident of a trunk left at one of these hotels in order to give a semblance of truth to his narrative.

Still he continued his investigation. If he noted upon his memorandum-book all the hotels he had visited, it was only because he wished to make sure of the discomfiture of the prisoner when they brought him here to prove the truth of his story.

At last he reached the Hôtel de Mariembourg, on the corner of the Rue de St. Quentin.

The house was modest in its proportions; but seemed respectable and well kept. Lecoq pushed open the glass doors, furnished with a spring bell, that opened into the vestibule, and entered the office—a neat room, brightly lighted.

There was a woman in the office. She was standing upon a chair, her face on a level with a large bird-cage, covered with a piece of black silk; and she was repeating three or four German words with great earnestness to the occupant of the cage.

She was so engrossed in this occupation that Lecoq was obliged to make considerable noise before he could attract her attention.

As she turned, he said:

"Ah! good-evening, Madame; you are much interested, I see, in teaching your parrot to talk."

"It is not a parrot that I have here," replied the woman, who had not yet descended from her perch; "it is a starling; I am trying to teach it to say in German: 'Have you breakfasted?'"

"What! can starlings talk?"

"As well as persons. Yes, Monsieur," said the woman, jumping down from her chair.

Just then the bird, as if it had understood the question, cried very distinctly:

"Camille! Where is Camille?"

But Lecoq was too anxious to bestow much attention upon the bird.

"Madame," he began, "I wish to speak to the proprietor of this hotel."

"I am the proprietor."

"Oh! very well. I was expecting a mechanic—from Leipsic, to meet me here in Paris. To my great surprise, he has not made his appearance; and I came to inquire if he was stopping here? His name is May."

"'May!'" repeated the hostess, thoughtfully. "'May!'"

"He ought to have arrived last Sunday evening."

The woman's face brightened.

"Wait a moment," said she. "Was this friend a middle-aged man, of medium size, of very dark complexion—wearing a full beard, and having very bright eyes?"

Lecoq trembled. This was a perfect description of the murderer.

"Yes," he stammered, "that is a very good portrait of the man."

"Ah, well! Monsieur, he came here on the afternoon of Shrove Sunday. He asked for a cheap room, and I showed him one on the fifth floor. The office-boy was not here at the time, and he insisted upon taking his trunk upstairs himself. I offered him some refreshments; but he declined to take anything, on account of his being in a great hurry; and he went away after giving me ten francs as security for his room-rent."

"Where is he?" inquired the young detective.

"*Mon Dieu!* Monsieur, that reminds me," replied the woman. "This man has not returned, and I have been very anxious about him. Paris is such a dangerous place for strangers! It is true he spoke French as well as you or I; but what of that? Last evening I gave orders that the commissioner of police should be informed of the matter."

"Yesterday—the commissioner!"

"Yes. Still I do not know whether the boy did the errand. I had forgotten all about it. Allow me to ring for the boy, and ask him."

A bucket of ice-water falling upon the head of the detective, could not have astonished him more than this announcement from the proprietress of the Hôtel de Mariembourg.

Had the murderer indeed told the truth? Could it be possible? Gevrol and the keeper of the prison were right, then! And M. Segmuller and he, Lecoq, were senseless fools, pursuing a phantom.

All this flashed like lightning through the brain of the detective.

But he had no time for reflection. The boy who had been summoned made his appearance—a big, overgrown boy—with a frank, chubby face.

"Fritz," demanded his mistress, "did you go to the office of the commissioner?"

"Yes, Madame."

"What did he say?"

"He was not in; but I spoke to his secretary, Monsieur Casimir, who told me to tell you not to worry yourself, that the man would return."

"He has not returned."

The boy raised his arms, with that movement of the shoulders which is the most eloquent translation of that response:

"What would you have me do about it?"

"You hear, sir," said the hostess, apparently thinking the importunate questioner would withdraw.

Such, however, was not the intention of Lecoq, and he did not move, though he had need of all his self-possession to retain his English accent.

"This is very annoying," said he, "very! I am even more anxious and undecided than I was before, since I am not certain that this is the man I am seeking."

"But, sir, what more can I tell you?"

Lecoq reflected for a moment, knitting his brows and biting his lips, as if he were trying to invent some means of solving the mystery.

The fact is, he was seeking some adroit circumlocution by which he could propose that this woman should show him the register in which all guests are compelled to inscribe their full names, their profession, and their residence; but he feared to arouse her suspicions.

"But, Madame, can you not remember the name which this man gave you? Was it May? Try to recollect if that was the name—May—May!"

"Ah! I have so many things to remember."

"It would be a great convenience if each guest were required to inscribe his name in a register, as is the custom in England."

"But they do register," replied the woman. "I have a book for that purpose, in which a whole column is allotted to each guest. And now I think of it; I could, if it would oblige you, show you my book. It is there, in the drawer of my secretary. Well, now! what can I have done with my key?"

And while the hostess, who seemed to possess but little more intelligence than her bird, was turning the whole office upside down in her search for the key, Lecoq scrutinized her closely.

She was about forty years of age, with an abundance of light hair, and a very fair complexion. She was well preserved—that is to say—she was plump and healthy in appearance; her glance was frank and unembarrassed; her voice was clear and musical, and her manners were pleasing, and entirely free from affectation.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I have found the miserable key at last."

She opened her desk, took out the register, which she laid upon the table, and began turning over the leaves.

At last she found the desired page.

"Sunday, February 20th," said she. "Look, Monsieur: here on the seventh line—May—no Christian name—foreign artist—coming from Leipsic—without papers."

While Lecoq was examining this record with a dazed air, the woman exclaimed:

"Ah! now I can explain how it happened that I forgot this name—May, and this strange profession—foreign artist. I did not write it myself."

"Who did write it, then?"

"The man himself, while I was finding ten francs to give him as change for the louis he handed me. You can see that the writing is not at all like that in which the names above and below are recorded."

Yes, Lecoq had observed that fact; and it was an irrefutable argument, as sure and as strong as a blow from a cudgel.

"Are you sure," he insisted, "that this record is in the man's handwriting; would you swear it?"

In his anxiety, he had forgotten his foreign accent. The woman noticed this at once, for she drew back and cast a suspicious glance at the pretended stranger. Then defiance and anger at having been duped seemed to take possession of her.

"I know what I am saying," she said, indignantly. "And now this is enough, is it not?"

Knowing that he had betrayed himself, and thoroughly ashamed of his lack of coolness, Lecoq renounced his English accent altogether.

"Pardon me," he said, "if I ask one more question. Have you this man's trunk in your possession?"

"Certainly."

"Ah! you would do me an immense service by showing it to me."

"Show it to you!" exclaimed the fair-haired hostess, angrily. "What do you take me for? What do you want? and who are you?"

"In a half hour you shall know," replied the detective, realizing that further persuasion would be useless.

He hastily left the room, ran to the Place de Robaux, leaped into a carriage, and giving the driver the address of the commissioner of police for that district, promised him a hundred sous over and above the regular fare if he would make haste. As might have been expected under such circumstances, the poor horses fairly flew under the stroke of the whip.

Lecoq was fortunate enough to find the commissioner at home. The detective made known his business, and was immediately ushered into the presence of the magistrate.

"Ah! sir," he cried, "will you assist me?"

And in a breath he told his story.

When it was concluded:

"It is really true that they came to inform me of this man's disappearance," said the judge. "Casimir told me about it this morning."

"They—came—to inform—you—" faltered Lecoq.

"Yes, yesterday; but I have had so much to occupy my time. Now, my boy, how can I serve you?"

"Come with me, sir; compel them to show us the trunk, and send for a locksmith to open it. Here is the authority—a search-warrant given me by the judge to use in case of necessity. Let us lose no time. I have a carriage at the door."

"We will start at once," said the commissioner.

When they had entered the *fiacre*, which started off at a gallop:

"Now, sir," said the young detective, "permit me to ask if you know this woman who keeps the Hôtel de Mariembourg?"

"Yes, indeed, I know her very well. When I was first appointed to this district, six years ago, I was not married, and for a long time I took my meals at this lady's *table d'hôte*. Casimir, my secretary, boards there yet."

"And what kind of a woman is she?"

"Why, upon my word, my young friend, Madame Milner—for such is her name—is a very respectable widow (esteemed and much beloved in this neighbourhood), who has a very prosperous business, and who

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remains a widow only from choice, for she is extremely agreeable, and has plenty of suitors."

"Then you do not think her capable, for the sake of a good round sum, of—what shall I say?—of serving some very rich culprit——"

"Have you gone mad?" interrupted the commissioner. "Madame Milner consent to testify falsely for the sake of money? Have I not just told you that she is an honest woman, and that she has a very comfortable fortune? Besides, she informed me yesterday that this man was missing, so——"

Lecoq made no reply; they had reached their destination.

On seeing her obstinate questioner reappear, accompanied by the commissioner, Madame Milner seemed to understand it all.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, "a detective! I might have known it! Some crime has been committed; and now my hotel has lost its reputation forever!"

It took quite a long time to reassure and to console her; all the time that was required to find a locksmith.

At last they went up to the room of the missing man, and Lecoq sprang to the trunk.

Ah! there was no denying it. It had, indeed, come from Leipsic; the little slips of paper pasted upon it by the different railroad companies proved it.

They opened it and found the articles mentioned by the prisoner.

Lecoq was petrified. With an almost stupefied air he watched the commissioner as he locked everything up in a cupboard and took possession of the key; then he felt that he could endure no more. He left the room with downcast head; and they heard him stumble like a drunken man as he descended the stairs.

CHAPTER XXIV

Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday, was very gay that year; that is to say: the pawnbrokers' shops and the public halls were crowded.

When Lecoq left the Hôtel de Mariembourg about midnight, the streets were as full as if it were noonday, and the *cafés* were thronged with customers.

But the young man had no heart for gayety. He mingled with the crowd without seeing it, and jostled groups of people chatting on the corners, without hearing the imprecations occasioned by his awkwardness. Where was he going! He had no idea. He walked on aimlessly, more inconsolable and desperate than the gambler who has staked his last hope with his last louis and lost.

"I must yield," he murmured; "this evidence is conclusive. My presumptions were only chimeras; my deductions, the playthings of chance! There only remains for me now to withdraw, with the least possible damage and ridicule, from the false position I have assumed."

Just as he reached the boulevard, a new idea entered his brain, startling him so much that he could scarcely restrain a cry.

"I am a fool," he exclaimed, striking his hand violently against his forehead.

"Is it possible," he continued, "that I am so strong in theory, yet so ridiculously weak in practice? Ah! I am only a child, yet a novice, disheartened by the slightest obstacle. I meet some difficulty. I lose courage and even the power to reason.

"Now, let me reflect calmly.

"What did I tell the judge about this man, whose plan of defence so puzzles us?

"Did I not tell him that we had to deal with a man of superior talent—with a man of consummate penetration, and experience—a bold, courageous man, who possesses an imperturbable coolness, and who will do anything to insure the success of his plans?

"Yes; I told him all this, and yet I give up in despair as soon as I meet a single circumstance that I cannot explain at once.

"It is evident, then, that this prisoner would not be likely to resort to old and hackneyed methods, and commonplace expedients. Ought I not to expect that it would require time, patience, and research to find a flaw in his defence?

"Consequently, the more appearances are against my presumptions, and in favor of the story told by the prisoner, the more certain it is that I am right—or logic is no longer logic."

The young man burst into a hearty laugh, and added:

"But to expose this theory at headquarters before Gevrol would perhaps be premature, and would win me a certificate entitling me to admission into the lunatic asylum."

He paused; he had reached his lodgings. He rang the bell; someone opened the door.

He groped his way slowly up to the fourth floor; he reached his room, and was about to enter, when a voice in the darkness called out:

"Is that you, Monsieur Lecoq?"

"It is I," replied the young man, somewhat surprised; "but who are you?"

"I am Father Absinthe."

"Upon my word! Well, you are welcome! I did not recognize your voice—will you come in?"

They entered, and Lecoq lit a candle. Then the young man could see his colleague, and, good heavens! what a condition he was in!

He was as dirty and spattered with mud as a lost dog which has been wandering about in the rain and mire for three or four days. His overcoat bore traces of frequent contact with damp walls; his hat had lost its form entirely. His eyes were anxious; his moustache drooped despondently. He mumbled his words as if his mouth were full of sand.

"Do you bring me bad news?" inquired Lecoq, after a short examination of his companion.

"Bad."

"The people you were following escaped you, then?"

The old man nodded his head in the affirmative.

"It is unfortunate—very unfortunate!" said Lecoq. "But it is useless to distress ourselves about it. Do not be so cast down, Father Absinthe. To-morrow, between us, we will repair the damages."

This friendly encouragement redoubled the old man's evident embarrassment. He flushed, this veteran, like a school-girl, and raising his hands toward heaven, he exclaimed:

"Ah, wretch! did I not tell you so?"

"Why! what is the matter with you?" inquired Lecoq.

Father Absinthe made no reply; he approached the mirror and began heaping the most cruel insults upon the reflection of his features therein.

"Old good-for-nothing!" he exclaimed. "Vile soldier! have you no shame left? You were intrusted with a mission, were you not? And how have you fulfilled it? You have drank, wretch, until you drank away your senses like an old sot, as you are. This shall not be passed over thus; and even if Monsieur Lecoq forgives me, you shall not taste another drop for a week. You shall suffer for this escapade."

"Come, come," said Lecoq, "you can sermonize by-and-by. Now tell me your story."

"Ah! I am not proud of it. I beg you to believe that; but never mind. Doubtless you received the letter in which I told you that I was going to follow the young men who seemed to recognize Gustave?"

"Yes, yes—go on!"

"Well, as soon as they entered the *café*, into which I had followed them, the young men began drinking, probably to drive away their emotion. After drinking, hunger apparently seized them, for they ordered breakfast. In my corner I followed their example. The repast, the coffee and beer all took time. Two hours elapsed before they were ready to pay their bill and go. Good! I supposed they would now return to their homes—not at all. They walked down the Rue Dauphin; and I saw them enter a coffee-house or smoking-room. Five minutes later I glided in after them; they were already engaged in a game of billiards."

He hesitated; it was not easy to tell the rest of his story.

"I seated myself at a little table, and asked for a newspaper. I was reading with one eye, and watching them with the other, when a worthy bourgeois entered, and took a seat beside me. As soon as he had seated himself he asked me to give him the paper when I had finished reading it. I handed it to him, and then we began talking of the weather. At last he proposed a game of bezique. I declined, and we afterward compromised on a game of piquet. The young men, you understand, were still knocking the balls about. We began playing, the stakes, a glass of brandy for each. I won. The bourgeois demanded his revenge, and we played two more games. Still I won. He insisted upon another game, and again I won, and still I drank—and drank again——"

"Go on, go on."

"Ah, here is the rub. After that I can remember nothing—neither of the bourgeois nor of the young men. It seems to me, however, that I recollect falling asleep in the *café*, and a waiter coming to wake me and tell me to go. Then I must have wandered about on the quays until I came to my senses, and decided to come and wait upon your stairs until you returned."

To the great surprise of Father Absinthe, Lecoq seemed rather thoughtful than angry.

"What do you think about this bourgeois, papa?" inquired Lecoq.

"I think that he was following me while I was following the others, and that he entered the *café* with the intention of getting me intoxicated."

"Give me a description of him."

"He was a tall and rather stout man, with a broad, red face, a flat nose; and he was very unpretending and affable in manner."

"It was he!" exclaimed Lecoq.

"He! Who?"

"The accomplice—the man whose footprints we discovered—the pretended drunkard—a devil incarnate, who will get the best of us yet, if we do not keep our eyes open. Do not forget him, papa; and if you ever meet him again——"

But Father Absinthe's confession was not ended. Like most devotees, he had reserved the worst sin for the last.

"This is not all," he resumed; "and I wish to conceal nothing from you. It seems to me that this traitor talked with me about the affair at the Poivriére, and that I told him all that we had discovered, and all that we intended to do."

Lecoq made such a threatening gesture that the old man drew back in consternation.

"Wretched man!" he exclaimed, "to betray our plans to the enemy!"

But he soon regained his calmness. At first the evil seemed to be beyond remedy; then he discovered that it had a good side, after all. It removed all the doubts he had felt after his visit to the Hôtel de Mariembourg.

"But this is not the time for deliberation," resumed the young detective. "I am overcome with fatigue; take a mattress from the bed for yourself, my friend, and let us go to rest."

CHAPTER XXV

Lecoq was a thoughtful man. Before going to bed he took good care to wind an alarm-clock that stood in his room, setting the alarm at six o'clock.

"So that we shall not miss the coach," he remarked to his companion, as he blew out the candle.

But he had not made allowance for his extreme weariness, and for the fumes of alcohol with which his friend's breath was redolent.

When the clock of Saint Eustache pealed forth the hour of six the alarm-clock performed its duty faithfully; but the shrill sound of the ingenious mechanism was not sufficiently loud to disturb the heavy sleep of the two men.

They would probably have slept some time longer, if, at half-past seven o'clock, two vigorous blows of the fist had not resounded on their door.

With one bound Lecoq was out of bed, amazed at seeing the bright sunlight, and furious at the uselessness of his precautions.

"Come in!" he cried to his early visitor.

The young detective had no enemies at that time, and he could, without danger, sleep with his door unlocked.

The door opened, and the shrewd face of Father Papillon appeared.

"Ah! it is my worthy coachman!" exclaimed Lecoq. "Is there anything new?"

"Excuse me, friend; it is the old cause that brings me here. You know—the thirty francs those wretched women paid me—I shall not sleep in peace till I have carried you free, until your regular fare would be equal to that amount. You made use of my carriage yesterday, one hundred sous' worth, and so I still owe you twenty-five francs' worth of riding."

"This is all nonsense, my friend!"

"Possibly; but I am responsible for it. I have sworn if you will not use my carriage to station myself and my vehicle before your door for eleven hours. At two francs and twenty-five centimes an hour, eleven hours would release me from my indebtedness. We should be even. Now, make up your mind."

He gazed at Lecoq beseechingly; it was evident that a refusal would wound him keenly.

"Very well," replied Lecoq; "I will take your carriage for the morning, only I ought to warn you that we are starting on a long journey."

"Cocotle's legs may be relied upon."

"My companion and myself have business in your quarter of the city. It is absolutely necessary for us to find the Widow Chupin's daughter-in-law; and I hope we shall be able to obtain her address from the commissioner of that district."

"Very well, we will go wherever you wish; I am at your orders."

A few moments later they were on their way.

Papillon, proudly erect upon his box, cracked his whip; and the vehicle tore along as rapidly as if the driver had been promised a hundred sous as *pourboire*.

Father Absinthe alone was sad. He had been forgiven, but he could not forgive himself that he, an old policeman, should have been duped like some ignorant provincial. If only he had not confided the secret plans of the prosecution!

He knew but too well that by this act he had increased the difficulties of their task twofold.

Their long drive was not fruitless. The secretary of the commissioner of police for the thirteenth district informed Lecoq that the wife of Polyte Chupin, with her child, lived in the suburbs, in the Rue de la Butte-aux-Cailles. He could not tell the precise number; but he described the house, and gave them some information concerning its occupants.

The Widow Chupin's daughter-in-law was a native of Auvergne; and she had been bitterly punished for preferring a Parisian to a compatriot.

She came to Paris when about twelve years of age, and obtained employment in a large factory. At the end of ten years of privation and constant toil, she had amassed, penny by penny, the sum of three thousand francs. Then her evil genius threw Polyte Chupin in her path.

She fell in love with this dissipated and selfish rascal; and he married her for her little hoard.

As long as the money lasted, that is, for about three or four months, everything went on pleasantly. But as soon as the last shilling was gone, Polyte left her, and, with delight, resumed his former life of idleness, thieving, and debauchery.

After this he returned to his wife, only in order to steal from her, when he suspected that she had saved a little money. And, periodically, she uncomplainingly allowed him to despoil her of the last penny of her earnings.

He wished to degrade her still more, for he hungered even for the price of her shame; but she resisted.

By this resistance, she had excited the hatred of the old Widow Chupin—hatred which manifested itself in such ill-treatment that the poor woman was forced to flee one night, with only the rags that covered her.

The mother and the son believed, perhaps, that starvation would effect what their threats and counsel had failed to accomplish.

Their shameful expectations had not been gratified.

The secretary added that these facts had become widely known, and that everybody did justice to the worth of the brave woman.

Hence the sobriquet which had been given her—Toinon, the virtuous—a rather coarse, but sincere tribute to her worth.

Grateful for this information, Lecoq re-entered the carriage.

The Rue de la Butte-aux-Cailles, to which Papillon was rapidly conducting them, did not bear much resemblance to the Boulevard Maxelherbes. Was it the abode of millionaires? One would not suppose it. One thing is certain, however: all the inhabitants knew one another as they do in a village, and the first person of whom Lecoq asked information concerning Mme. Polyte Chupin, relieved him of all embarrassment.

"Toinon, the virtuous, lives in that house on the right," was the answer; "on the upper floor, the door facing you."

The directions were so precise that Lecoq and Father Absinthe went straight to the room they were seeking.

It was a cold and gloomy attic room, of medium size, and lighted by a small skylight.

A pallet of straw, a broken table, two chairs, and a few plain kitchen utensils, formed the sole furniture of the apartment.

But, in spite of the evident poverty, everything shone with neatness; and one could have eaten off the floor, to use Father Absinthe's forcible expression.

The two officers entered, and found a woman engaged in making heavy linen sacks. She was seated in the centre of the room, directly under the window, so that the light would fall upon her work.

At the sight of two strangers, she half rose, surprised, and perhaps a little frightened; but when they explained that they desired a few moments' conversation with her, she gave up her own seat, to offer it to them.

But Father Absinthe insisted that she should sit down again, and he remained standing, while Lecoq took possession of the other chair.

In a single glance Lecoq took an inventory of the humble abode, and, so to speak, appraised the woman.

She was short, stout, and extremely ordinary in appearance. A forest of coarse, black hair, growing very low on the forehead, and large black eyes set very close together, imparted to her countenance something of the patient resignation one sees in the faces of ill-treated animals.

Possibly, in former days, she had possessed what we called the beauty *du diable;* but now she looked almost as old as her mother-in-law.

Sorrow and privation, excessive toil, nights spent in labour, tears and the blows she had received, had made her complexion livid—had reddened her eyes and made deep furrows about her temples.

Still her whole person exhaled a perfume of native honesty which had not been tainted, even by the foul atmosphere in which she had lived.

Her child did not resemble her in the least. He was pale and puny in appearance; his eyes burned with a phosphorescent brilliancy; and his hair was of that faded yellow tint that they call blonde in Paris.

One little circumstance attracted the attention of both officers.

The mother was attired in a very old and faded calico dress; but the child was warmly clad in warm woollen material.

"Madame, you have doubtless heard of a great crime, committed in your mother-in-law's establishment," began Lecoq, gently.

"Alas! yes, Monsieur."

Then she quickly added:

"But my husband could not have been implicated in it, since he is in prison."

Did not this objection, which preceded suspicion, betray the most horrible apprehensions?

"Yes, I am aware of that," replied her visitor. "Polyte was arrested a fortnight ago——"

"Yes, and very unjustly, Monsieur. I could swear it. He was, as is often the case, led astray by his companions, wicked, desperate men. He is so weak when he has taken a glass of wine, they can do whatsoever they will with him. If he were only left to himself, he would not harm a child. One has only to look at him——"

As she spoke she turned her red and swollen eyes to a miserable photograph hanging upon the wall. The picture represented a frightfully ugly, dissipated-looking young man, with a terrible squint, a repulsive mouth, only partially concealed by a faint mustache, and his hair carefully plastered down about the temples. This was Polyte.

Yet there was no mistaking the fact that this unfortunate woman loved him—had always loved him; besides, he was her husband.

A moment's silence followed this act, which revealed the existence of passion so clearly; and during this silence the door of the room was opened softly.

A man put in his head and withdrew it instantly, with a low exclamation. Then the door closed again, the key grated in the lock, and they heard hurried steps descending the staircase.

Lecoq was sitting with his back to the door, and could not see the face of the visitor.

And yet he had turned so quickly at the sound, and he understood the whole affair so well that he was not surprised at all.

Indeed, he did not feel the shadow of a doubt.

"It is he, the accomplice!" he cried.

Thanks to his position, Father Absinthe had seen the man's face.

"Yes," said he, "yes, I recognize the man who made me drink with him yesterday."

With a bound the two men threw themselves against the door, exhausting their strength in vain efforts to open it. It resisted all their attempts, for it was of solid oak, having been purchased by the proprietor of the house from some one of the public buildings in process of demolition, and it was furnished with a strong and massive fastening.

"Help us!" cried Father Absinthe to the woman, who stood petrified with astonishment; "give us an iron bar, a piece of iron, a nail—anything!"

The younger man was making frantic efforts to push back the bolt, or to tear the lock from the wood. He was wild with rage.

At last they succeeded in forcing it open, and the two men, animated by an equal ardor, dashed out in pursuit of their mysterious adversary.

When they reached the street, they made inquiries of the bystanders. They could give a description of the man, and that was something. Two persons had seen him enter the house of Toinon, the virtuous; a third had seen him when he ran out. Some children who were playing on the street assured them that this individual had run in the direction of the Rue du Moulin-des-Pres as fast as his legs could carry him.

It was in this street, near the corner of the Rue de la Butte-aux-Cailles, that Lecoq had ordered his coachman to stop.

"Let us hasten there!" proposed Father Absinthe; "perhaps Papillon can give us some information."

But his companion shook his head despondently, and would go no further.

"What good would it do?" he asked. "The presence of mind that made this man think to turn the key, has saved him. He is at least ten minutes in advance of us; by this time he is far away, and we should not overtake him."

Father Absinthe was livid with anger. He now regarded as a personal enemy this adroit accomplice who had so cruelly duped him; and he would have given a month's pay to be able to lay his hand on the man's collar.

"Ah! this brigand does not lack assurance," said he. "To think how he defies and mocks us; and how for the third time he has escaped us. Three times!"

The young detective was at least as angry as his companion—and his vanity was wounded besides; but he felt the necessity of coolness and deliberation.

"Yes," he replied, thoughtfully, "the man is daring and shrewd; and he does not sit down with folded arms. If we are working, he also is bestirring himself. The demon is everywhere. On whichever side I make an attack, I find him on the defensive. It was he, my friend, who made you lose the clew to Gustave's identity; it was he who arranged that little comedy at the Hôtel du Mariembourg."

"And now," remarked his companion, "now let the general come and tell us that we are chasing phantoms."

This flattery, delicate as it was, did not divert Lecoq's attention from the matter under consideration.

"Until now, this man has been in advance of us everywhere; this fact explains the failures that have attended all my efforts. Here, we arrived before him. But if he came here, it was because he scented danger. Therefore, we may hope. Let us return to the wife of this rascal, Polyte."

Alas! poor Toinon, the virtuous, did not understand this affair. She had remained upstairs, holding her child by the hand, and leaning over the bannister, her eyes and her ears on the *qui vive*.

As soon as she perceived the two men leisurely ascending the stairs, she came to meet them.

"In the name of Heaven, what does all this mean?" she exclaimed. "What has happened?"

But Lecoq was not the man to tell his affairs in a corridor, tapestried, perhaps, with listening and curious ears, and it was not until he had made Toinon enter her own apartment and close the door securely, that he answered her.

"We started in pursuit of an accomplice to the murders at the Poivrière. He came in, hoping to find you alone, but our presence frightened him."

"An assassin!" faltered Toinon, with clasped hands. "What could he want of me?"

"Who can say? It is very probable that he is one of your husband's friends."

"Oh! Monsieur."

"What, did you not tell me just now that Polyte had some very undesirable acquaintances? But do not be alarmed; this does not compromise him in the least. Besides, you can very easily clear him of all suspicion."

"How? In what way? Oh, tell me at once."

"Merely by answering me frankly, and by assisting me—you, who are an honest woman—to find the guilty party. Among all the friends of your husband, do you know of none capable of such a deed? Give me the names of his acquaintances."

The poor woman's hesitation was evident; undoubtedly she had been present at many sinister cabals, and had been threatened with terrible punishment if she dared to disclose their plans.

"You have nothing to fear," said Lecoq, encouragingly, "and never, I promise you, shall anyone know that you have told me a word. And very probably you can tell me nothing that I do not know now. I have heard much of your life already, to say nothing of the brutality with which you have been treated by Polyte and his mother."

"My husband, sir, has never treated me brutally," said the young woman, indignantly; "besides, that is something which concerns only myself."

"And your mother-in-law?"

"She is, perhaps, a trifle quick-tempered; but, in reality, she has a very good heart."

"Then why did you flee from the Widow Chupin's house, if you were so very happy there?"

Toinon, the virtuous, turned scarlet to the very roots of her hair.

"I left there for other reasons," she responded. "There were always a great many intoxicated men about the house; and, sometimes, when I was alone, some of them wished to carry their pleasantry too far. You will probably say that I have a very solid fist, and that I am quite capable of protecting myself. That is true, so I could, perhaps, have borne it. But when I was away, some of them were wicked enough to make this child drink to such an excess that on my return I found him as stiff and cold as if he were dead. It was necessary to call a physician to restore him——"

She suddenly paused; her eyes dilated. From red she turned livid, and in a choked, unnatural voice, she cried:

"Toto! wretched child!"

Lecoq looked behind him, and shuddered. He understood it all. This child, who was not yet five years old, had stolen up behind him and was ferreting in the pockets of his overcoat, had plundered them, had rifled them of their contents.

"Ah, well—yes!" exclaimed the unfortunate mother, bursting into tears. "It was always so over there. As soon as the child was out of my sight, they took him to the city. They carried him into the crowded streets, and they taught him to pick people's pockets, and to bring them all he could find. If he was detected they were angry with the child, and beat him. If he succeeded they gave him a sou to buy candy, and kept what he had taken."

She hid her face in her hands, and in an almost unintelligible voice she sobbed:

"And I did not wish my little one to be a thief!"

But what this poor creature did not tell was that he who had led the child out into the streets, to teach him to steal, was its own father, and her husband, Polyte Chupin. But the two men understood this perfectly; and so horrible was the man's crime, and so despairing the grief of the woman, that they were touched in the very depths of their souls.

After that, Lecoq's only thought was to shorten the painful scene as much as possible. Besides, the poor mother's emotion was a sufficient guarantee of her sincerity.

"Listen," said he, with affected harshness; "two questions only, and then I will leave you. Among the *habitués* of the establishment was there a man by the name of Gustave?"

"No, sir; I am very sure there was not."

"Very well. But Lacheneur—you must know Lacheneur!"

"Yes, sir; I know him."

The young policeman could not repress an exclamation of delight. He thought that he at least held an end of the thread that would lead him to the light—to the truth.

"Who is this man?" he inquired, with intense anxiety.

"Oh! he is not at all like the other men who come to drink at my mother-in-law's saloon. I have seen him only once; but I remember him perfectly. It was on Sunday. He was in a carriage. He stopped near the unoccupied ground and spoke to Polyte. When he went away my husband said to me: 'Do you see that old man there? he will make our fortune.' I thought him a very respectable-looking gentleman——"

"That is enough," interrupted Lecoq. "Now it is necessary for you to appear before the judge and make your deposition. I have a carriage below. Take your child with you, if you wish; but make haste; come quickly—come!"

CHAPTER XXVI

M. Segmuller was one of those magistrates who cherish their profession with an undivided love, who give themselves to it, body and soul, devoting to it all the energy, intelligence, and sagacity of which they are possessed.

As a judge, he displayed, in the search after truth, the tenacity and zeal of a physician struggling against some unknown disease—the enthusiasm of the artist who is wearing out his very life in his devotion to the beautiful.

Hence, it is easy to understand how deeply he had become interested in this mysterious case which had been confided to him.

He found in it all the elements that cannot fail to awaken intense interest. The magnitude of the crime, the peculiar circumstances attending it, the impenetrable mystery that enshrouded the victims and the murderer, the strange attitude assumed by the prisoner, all served to make a profound impression upon his mind.

The romantic element was not lacking, furnished by the two women, all traces of whom had been lost.

The extreme uncertainty of the result was another attraction. Self-love never loses its rights; and M. Segmuller felt that success would be honourable in proportion to the magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome. And assisted by such a man as Lecoq, in whom he had recognized a most valuable auxiliary, and a man with a positive genius for his calling, he felt quite confident of success.

Even after the fatiguing labors of the day he did not think of freeing himself from the burden of his responsibility, or of driving away care until the morrow.

He ate his dinner hurriedly, and as soon as he had swallowed his coffee began to study the case with renewed ardor.

He had brought with him from his office a copy of the prisoner's deposition; and he went over it again and again, seeking some weak spot that might be attacked with a probability of success.

He analyzed each answer, and weighed one expression after another. He sought some flaw in the armor through which he could slip a question, which would rend the whole structure of defence in pieces, like a train of gunpowder.

The greater part of the night was spent in this work; but that did not prevent him from rising long before his usual hour.

By eight o'clock he was dressed, and shaved, had arranged his papers, taken his cup of chocolate, and was on his way to the Palais de Justice.

He quite forgot that the impatience, which possessed him, was not boiling in the veins of others. But he soon discovered that fact.

The Palais de Justice was scarcely awake when he arrived there. All the doors had not been opened. In the corridors some of the door-keepers and a crowd of sleepy office-boys were changing their ordinary clothing for their official costumes.

Others, in their shirt-sleeves, were vigorously sweeping and dusting the various rooms. Others were standing at the windows of the dressing-room shaking and brushing the long black robes of the lawyers. In the court-room some clerks were chaffing each other, while they awaited the coming of the chief clerk, and the opening of the bureaus of information.

M. Segmuller went to consult the attorney-general; or the *procureur impérial*, as he is called in France, but his office was empty. No one had, as yet, arrived.

Angry and impatient, he returned to his own office; and with his eyes fastened upon the pendulum, caught himself wondering at the slowness of its movements.

About ten minutes past nine, Goquet, the smiling clerk, made his appearance, and was greeted with a gruff "Well! so you have come at last," that left him in no doubt as to the state of his master's humour.

Yet Goquet had come much earlier than usual, for his movements also had been quickened by curiosity.

He tried to make some excuse, but M. Segmuller cut it short, with such a curt response, that he felt no desire to continue the conversation. "Ah!" he thought, "it is very evident that the wind is blowing from a bad corner this morning."

And so, bowing before the storm, he philosophically put on his black silk sleeves, went to his little table, and pretended to be absorbed in the task of cutting his pens and preparing his paper.

But although he dared not show it he was very much vexed. For the evening before, while conversing with his wife, he had gained some new ideas in regard to the mysterious prisoner; and he was eager to impart them to the judge.

But no favourable opportunity presented itself. M. Segmuller, who was usually calmness personified, and dignity *par excellence*, was transformed. He paced restlessly to and fro, he sat down, he sprang up, he gesticulated wildly, and seemed unable to be quiet for a moment.

"The prosecution is evidently making no headway," thought the clerk. "May's prospects are encouraging."

At that moment this idea delighted him; he sided with the prisoner, his rancour was so intense.

From half-past nine to ten o'clock M. Segmuller rang for his messenger at least five times, and each time he asked him the same questions.

"Are you sure that Monsieur Lecoq has not been here this morning? Inquire! If he has not been here he must certainly have sent someone, or he must have written me."

Each time the astonished door-keeper replied:

"No one has been here, and there is no letter."

The judge became more and more angry and impatient.

"It is inconceivable!" he murmured. "Here I am upon coals of fire, and that man dares to keep me waiting. Where can he be?"

At last he ordered a messenger to go and see if he could not find Lecoq somewhere in the neighbourhood; perhaps in some restaurant or coffee-house; told him to go and find him and bring him there quickly; very quickly.

When the man had gone, M. Segmuller seemed to recover his composure, in a slight degree, at least.

"We must not lose valuable time," he said to his clerk. "I was to examine the Widow Chupin's son. I had better do so immediately. Go and tell them to bring him to me. Lecoq left the order at the prison."

In less than a quarter of an hour Polyte entered the room.

From head to foot, from his glazed cap to his gaudy-coloured carpet slippers, he was indeed the man of the portrait upon which poor Toinon, the virtuous, had lavished such loving glances.

But the picture was flattered. The photographer could not fix the expression of low cunning that was imprinted upon the face of the original, nor the impudence that breathed in his smile, nor the mingled cowardice and ferocity of his eyes, which always evaded you. Nor could the picture portray the unwholesome, livid pallor of his skin, the restless opening and shutting of the eyelids, and the thin lips tightly drawn over the short, sharp teeth.

It would be difficult for him to astonish those who saw him by any act of violence.

For to see him, was to judge and to estimate his worth.

When he had answered the preliminary questions, told the judge that he was thirty years of age, and that he had been born in Paris, he assumed a pretentious attitude and waited.

But before proceeding to the real matter in hand, M. Segmuller wished to relieve the complacent scoundrel of some of his assurance.

He reminded Polyte, in very forcible terms, that the judgment to be rendered in the affair in which he was implicated would depend very much upon his behaviour and his responses during the present examination.

Polyte listened with a nonchalant and even ironical air.

In fact, he cared only the merest trifle for the threat. He had made previous inquiries and had ascertained that it would be impossible to condemn him to more than six months' imprisonment for the offence for which he had been arrested; and what did a month more or less matter to him?

The judge, who read this feeling in Polyte's eyes, cut his discourse short.

"Justice now demands some information from you concerning the *habitués* of your mother's establishment."

"There are a great many of them, M'sieur," responded Polyte, in a coarse, harsh voice.

"Do you know one among them by the name of Gustave?"

"No, M'sieur."

To insist would probably awaken suspicion in Polyte's mind, if he was really speaking the truth; so M. Segmuller continued:

"You must, however, remember Lacheneur?"

"Lacheneur? It is the first time I have ever heard that name."

"Take care. The police have means of finding out a great many things."

The scapegrace did not flinch.

"I am telling the truth, M'sieur," he insisted. "What interest could I possibly have in deceiving you?"

The door opened suddenly, and Toinon, his wife, entered with her child in her arms.

On seeing her husband, the poor woman uttered a cry of joy, and sprang toward him. But Polyte, stepping back, bestowed upon her a terrible glance that rooted her to the spot.

"It must be my enemy who pretends that I know anyone named Lacheneur! I would like to kill the person who uttered such a falsehood. Yes; kill the person—and I will never forgive it."

CHAPTER XXVII

Having received orders to go in search of Lecoq and to bring him back, if he succeeded in finding him, M. Segmuller's messenger had started on his errand.

The commission was not at all disagreeable to him; it afforded him an excuse for quitting his post, and also a very pleasant little stroll through the neighbourhood.

He went to the prefecture first, by the longest way, however; but on arriving there, he could find no one who had seen the young detective.

He then strolled leisurely through the restaurants and through the drinking saloons in the vicinity of the Palais de Justice, and living through its patronage.

Being a conscientious commissioner, he entered each of these establishments, and having recognized several acquaintances, he felt compelled to proffer and to accept certain courtesies at the rate of fifty centimes per glass. But no Lecoq.

He was returning in haste, a trifle uneasy on account of the length of his absence, when a carriage stopped before the gateway of the palace.

He looked up, and—oh, happiness!—from this carriage he saw Lecoq descend, followed by Father Absinthe and the Widow Chupin's daughter-in-law.

His serenity of mind was instantly restored; and it was in a very important tone that he delivered the order for Lecoq to follow him without losing a minute.

"Monsieur has asked for you a number of times," said he. "He has been extremely impatient, and he is in very bad humour; and you may expect to have your head snapped off in the most expeditious manner."

Lecoq smiled as he ascended the staircase. Was he not bringing with him the most potent of justifications! He was thinking of the agreeable surprise he had in store for the judge, and he seemed to see the sudden brightening of that functionary's gloomy face.

And yet the message delivered by the door-keeper, and his urgent appeal that Lecoq should not loiter by the way, was fated to produce the most unfortunate results.

Expected, as he supposed, and urged not to delay, Lecoq saw nothing wrong in opening the door of M. Segmuller's office without knocking, and he obeyed the fatal impulse that impelled him to enter in advance of the poor woman whose testimony might be so decisive.

Stupefaction seized him and held him motionless when he saw that the judge was not alone, and when he recognized, in this witness, whom M. Segmuller was examining, the original of the portrait, Polyte Chupin.

Instantly he comprehended his mistake, and its consequences. He did his best to prevent any communication, any interchange of thought, between the husband and wife.

He sprang toward Toinon, and, catching her rudely by the arm, he ordered her to leave the room on the instant.

"You can not remain here," he cried; "come, go!"

But the poor creature was entirely overcome, and trembled like a leaf. She could see and hear nothing except her husband. To behold again this man whom she adored, what happiness! But why did he recoil from her? Why did he cast such withering glances upon her?

She tried to speak, to explain; but while she stood there frightened and bewildered, Polyte's harsh condemnation pierced her brain like a rifle-ball.

Seeing this, Lecoq seized her about the waist, and, lifting her as he would a feather, he carried her out into the corridor.

The whole scene had not lasted more than a moment, and M. Segmuller was still engaged in framing the order, when he found that the door was already closed, and that he was again alone with Polyte.

"Ah, ha!" thought Goquet, in a flutter of delight; "here is something new."

But as these little diversions never made him forget his duties as a clerk, he leaned toward the judge to ask:

"Must I take down the last words that were uttered by the witness?"

"Certainly," responded M. Segmuller, "and word for word, if you please."

He paused; the door opened again, to admit the door-keeper, who timidly, and with a rather guilty air, brought in a note, and again withdrew.

This note, scribbled in pencil by Lecoq upon a leaf torn from his memorandum-book, told the judge the name of the woman who had just entered his room, and told briefly, but clearly, the information that had just been obtained.

"That boy thinks of everything!" murmured M. Segmuller.

The meaning of the scene that had taken place before his eyes a moment previous was now evident.

He understood the whole.

He regretted most bitterly this unfortunate meeting. But whom ought he to blame for it? Himself—himself alone; his impatience, his lack of caution, which, as soon as his messenger had departed, had induced him to summon Polyte Chupin.

While he could not doubt the enormous influence of this trifling circumstance, he would not allow himself to be alarmed by it, and continued his task of endeavouring to elicit some information from the sorry specimen before him.

"Let us go on," he said to Polyte.

The scapegrace gave a careless sign of assent. Since his wife had been taken from the room he had not moved, and was apparently sublimely indifferent to all that was passing around him.

"Was that your wife who came in just now?" demanded M. Segmuller.

"Yes."

"She wished to embrace you, and you repulsed her."

"I did not repulse her, M'sieur."

"You kept her at a distance; if you had any affection, you would at least have given a look to your child, which she held out to you. Why was it?"

"It was not a time for sentiment."

"You are not telling the truth. You simply desired to attract her attention while you dictated her deposition."

"I—I dictate her deposition! I do not understand you, M'sieur."

"Were it not for this supposition, the words you uttered would be unintelligible."

"What words?"

The judge turned to his clerk:

"Goquet," said he, "read the last remark you took down, to the witness."

The clerk, in a monotonous voice, read:

"I would like to kill the person who dared to say that I knew Lacheneur."

"*Eh bien!*" insisted M. Segmuller; "what do you mean by that?"

"It is very easy to understand, M'sieur."

M. Segmuller rose.

"Enough of this prevaricating! You certainly ordered your wife to keep silence; that fact is evident. Why should you have done this? and what can she tell us? Do you suppose that the police are ignorant of your relations with Lacheneur—of your conversation with him when he, in a carriage, and in an unfrequented spot, awaited your coming—of the hopes of fortune which you based upon him? Be guided by me; decide to confess all, while there is yet time; do not pursue a course which may lead you into serious danger. One can be an accomplice in more ways than one."

It is certain that Polyte's impudence and indifference had received a very severe shock. He seemed confounded, and hung his head, muttering some unintelligible response.

Still, he preserved an obstinate silence; and the judge, who had just employed his strongest argument, and in vain, gave up in despair. He rang the bell, and ordered the guard to conduct the witness back to prison, and to take every precaution to prevent him from seeing his wife again.

When Polyte had departed, Lecoq reappeared. He was in despair.

"To think," he repeated again and again, "that I did not draw from this woman all that she knew, when it could have been done so easily. But I thought that you would be waiting for me, Monsieur, so I made haste to bring her here. I thought I was acting for the best——"

"Never mind, the misfortune can be repaired."

"No, Monsieur, no; we shall learn nothing more from this poor woman. It is impossible to extort a single word from her since she has seen her husband. She loves him, with a blind and foolish adoration; and he has an all-powerful influence over her. He has ordered her to be silent, and she will be silent 'even unto death.'"

The young man's fears were well grounded. M. Segmuller saw this only too well, the instant Toinon, the virtuous, again set foot in his office.

The poor creature seemed nearly heartbroken. It was evident that she would have given her life to retract the words which had escaped her in her attic. Polyte's look had made her turn cold with horror, and had aroused the most sinister apprehensions in her mind. Not understanding his connection with the affair, she asked herself if her testimony would not be a death-warrant for him.

So she refused to make any response other than "no" or "I do not know" to questions; and all that she had previously said she retracted. She swore that she was mistaken, that she had been misunderstood, that her words had been misrepresented. She declared upon the most sacred oaths, that she had never before heard the name of Lacheneur.

At last, when they pressed their questions too closely, she burst into wild, despairing sobs, pressing her weeping child convulsively to her breast.

What could one do against this foolish obstinacy, which was as unreasoning and blind as that of a brute? M. Segmuller hesitated. Finally, after a moment's reflection:

"You may retire, my good woman," he said, kindly; "but remember that your strange silence injures your husband more than anything you could say."

She left the room—or rather, she rushed wildly away—and the judge and the detective exchanged glances of dismay and consternation.

"I said so before," thought Goquet; "the prisoner understands what he is about. I would be willing to bet a hundred to one on the prisoner."

CHAPTER XXVIII

In a single word Delamorte Felines has defined prosecution. A "struggle," he terms it; and it is, in reality, a terrible struggle between justice, seeking after the truth, and crime, endeavoring to conceal it.

The judge of instruction, as he is called in France, is invested with discretionary powers, and is responsible only to the law and to his own conscience.

No one can hamper him, no one can give him orders. Administration, police, armed force, are all at his disposal. At a word from him twenty agents, or a hundred, if need be, search Paris, ransack France, or explore Europe.

If he suppose that any person can throw light upon an obscure point, he orders that man to appear in his office; and he must come, if he live a hundred leagues away. Such is the position.

Isolated behind the bars, and probably in the solitary cell, the man accused of a crime is, as it were, cut off from the number of the living. No news from without reaches him in the cell, where he lives beneath the eye of his keeper. Of what is said, of what is passing outside these walls, he knows nothing. What witnesses have been examined, and what they have said, he knows not; and, in his doubt and uncertainty, he again and again asks himself to what extent he has been compromised, what proofs have been collected against him, and what grave charges are ready to crush him.

Such is the position of the prisoner. And yet, in spite of the fact that the two adversaries are so unequally armed, the man in the solitary cell not unfrequently conquers.

If he is sure that he has left behind him no proofs of his crime, if he has no antecedents to rise up against him, he can, impregnable in a defence of absolute denial, brave all the attacks of justice.

Such was, at this moment, the situation of May, the mysterious murderer.

M. Segmuller and Lecoq, with mingled sorrow and anger, were forced to admit this.

They had hoped that Polyte Chupin or his wife would give them the solution of this vexed problem—this hope had been disappointed.

And the identity of the prisoner remained as problematical as ever.

"And yet," exclaimed the judge vehemently, "and yet these people know something about this matter, and if they would ——"

"They will not."

"Why, what motive influences them? This is what is necessary to discover. Who will tell us by what dazzling promises the silence of a scoundrel like this Polyte Chupin has been purchased? Upon what recompense does he count, since he is willing to brave real danger by this silence?"

Lecoq did not reply, but his knit brows showed that his thoughts were busy.

"There is one question which puzzles me more than anything else; and if it could be answered we should have made a long step in advance," he finally remarked.

"What is it?"

"You ask, Monsieur, what reward has been promised to Chupin. I ask who it is that has promised him this reward."

"Who has promised it? Evidently the accomplice who has beaten us on every point."

At this homage to the skill and audacity of his opponent, the young detective clinched his hands, and vowed vengeance against the man who had made him a prisoner, only an hour before.

"Certainly," he replied. "I recognize his hand in this. And now, what artifice has he used? We understand the method by which he succeeded in gaining an interview with the Widow Chupin. But how has he succeeded in reaching Polyte, who is a prisoner, and closely guarded?"

He did not utter his whole thought, but M. Segmuller understood him, and seemed intensely surprised, and even a trifle indignant, at the young man's suspicions.

"What can you mean?" said he. "You cannot suppose that one of the employees has been corrupted?"

Lecoq shook his head with a rather equivocal air.

"I mean nothing," he replied; "I suspect no one. I am merely in pursuit of information. Has Chupin been warned—yes or no?"

"Yes, of course."

"The fact is admitted then. So I presume we must explain it by supposing either that there are informers in the prison, or that Chupin has been allowed to see some visitor."

M. Segmuller was evidently disturbed. He seemed to be hesitating between two opinions; then, suddenly making up his mind, he rose, took his hat, and said:

"I wish to have this matter cleared up. Come, Monsieur Lecoq."

In two minutes (thanks to the dark and narrow passage that connects the depot with the Palais de Justice) they entered the jail.

Rations had just been served to the prisoners, and the head keeper, who had been engaged in superintending the distribution, was now promenading in the courtyard with Gevrol.

As soon as he saw the judge, he approached him with great deference of manner.

"Undoubtedly, sir, you have come about the prisoner, May?"

"Yes."

Since it was a question of a prisoner, Gevrol thought he might approach without impropriety.

"I was just now talking to Inspector Gevrol about the prisoner," pursued the keeper, "and I was telling him that I had good reason to be satisfied with this man's conduct. It not only has been quite unnecessary to place him in the strait-jacket, but his mood seems to have changed entirely. He has a good appetite; he is as gay as a lark, and laughs and jests with his keeper."

The judge and Lecoq exchanged troubled glances.

This gayety might be assumed for the purpose of carrying out his *rôle* as a jester and buffoon; but might it not have come from a certainty of defeating his opponents? or, who knows? perhaps, from some favourable news received from without.

,This last supposition offered itself so persistently to M. Segmuller's mind that he trembled.

"Are you sure," he inquired, "that no communication from outside can reach the inmates of the solitary cells?"

The worthy keeper seemed to be deeply wounded by the implied doubt. His subordinates suspected—perhaps the keeper himself! He could not help lifting his hands to heaven in mute protest against such injustice.

"Am I sure?" he exclaimed. "Then you have never visited the solitary cells—or the secret cells, as we call them. You have no idea, then, of the precautions that surround them, the triple bolts, the grating that shuts out the sunlight, to say nothing of the guard who walks beneath the windows night and day. Not even a bird could reach the prisoners in those cells."

Such a description could not fail to reassure the most sceptical.

"Now that I am easy on that score," said the judge, "I would like some information regarding another prisoner—a certain Chupin."

"Ah! I know—a vile scoundrel!"

"He is, indeed. I would like to know it he received any visitor yesterday?"

"It will be necessary for me to inquire of the clerk before I can answer with certainty. Wait a moment; here is a man who, perhaps, can inform us. He is on guard at the entrance. Here, Ferrau, this way!" he called.

The man hastened to obey the summons.

"Do you know whether the prisoner named Chupin was in the reception-room yesterday?"

"Yes, sir, he was; I conducted him there myself."

"And who was his visitor?" inquired Lecoq, eagerly; "a large man, was it not, very red in the face——"

"Excuse me, Monsieur; the visitor was a lady; his aunt, he told me."

An exclamation of surprise escaped the lips of the judge and of the detective, and together they demanded:

"What was she like?"

"Small," replied the man, "with very fair complexion and light hair; she seemed to be a very respectable woman."

"It must have been one of the fugitives who escaped from Widow Chupin's hovel," exclaimed Lecoq.

Gevrol laughed loudly.

"Still that Russian princess," said he.

But the judge did not appear to enjoy the pleasantry.

"You forget yourself, Monsieur," he said, severely. "You forget that the sneers you address to your comrade also touch me!"

The general saw that he had gone too far; and while he bestowed one of his most venomous glances upon Lecoq, he mumbled his excuses to the judge.

M. Segmuller did not hear them apparently. He bowed to the keeper, and motioned Lecoq to follow him.

"Run to the prefecture," he said, as soon as they were out of hearing, "and ascertain how and under what pretext this woman obtained permission to visit Polyte Chupin."

(*To be continued*)

Gifts

By JAMES THOMSON

GIVE a man a horse he can ride,
  Give a man a boat he can sail;
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,
  On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,
  Give a man a book he can read:
And his home is bright with a calm delight,
  Though the room be poor indeed.

Give a man a girl he can love,
  As I, O my love, love thee;
And his heart is great with the pulse of Fate,
  At home, on land, on sea.

Our Lady's Juggler

By ANATOLE FRANCE

Cordially
Anatole France

IN THE days of King Louis there was a poor juggler in France, a native of Compiègne, Barnaby by name, who went about from town to town performing feats of skill and strength.

On fair days he would unfold an old worn-out carpet in the public square, and when by means of a jovial address, which he had learned of a very ancient juggler, and which he never varied in the least, he had drawn together the children and loafers, he assumed extraordinary attitudes, and balanced a tin plate on the tip of his nose. At first the crowd would feign indifference.

But when, supporting himself on his hands face downwards, he threw into the air six copper balls, which glittered in the sunshine, and caught them again with his feet; or when throwing himself backwards until his heels and the nape of the neck met, giving his body the form of a perfect wheel, he would juggle in this posture with a dozen knives, a murmur of admiration would escape the spectators and pieces of money rain down upon the carpet.

Nevertheless, like the majority of those who live by their wits, Barnaby of Compiègne had a great struggle to make a living.

Earning his bread in the sweat of his brow, he bore rather more than his share of the penalties consequent upon the misdoings of our father Adam.

Again, he was unable to work as constantly as he would have been willing to do. The warmth of the sun and the broad daylight were as necessary to enable him to display his brilliant parts as to the trees if flower and fruit should be expected of them. In winter time he was nothing more than a tree stripped of its leaves, and as it were dead. The frozen ground was hard to the juggler, and, like the grasshopper of which Marie de France tells us, the inclement season caused him to suffer both cold and hunger. But as he was simple natured he bore his ills patiently.

He had never meditated on the origin of wealth, nor upon the inequality of human conditions. He believed firmly that if this life should prove hard, the life to come could not fail to redress the balance, and this hope upheld him. He did not resemble those thievish and miscreant Merry Andrews who sell their souls to the devil. He never blasphemed God's name; he lived uprightly, and although he had no wife of his own, he did not covet his neighbour's, since woman is ever the enemy of the strong man, as it appears by the history of Samson recorded in the Scriptures.

In truth, his was not a nature much disposed to carnal delights, and it was a greater deprivation to him to forsake the tankard than the Hebe who bore it. For whilst not wanting in sobriety, he was fond of a drink when the weather waxed hot. He was a worthy man who feared God, and was very devoted to the Blessed Virgin.

Never did he fail on entering a church to fall upon his knees before the image of the Mother of God, and offer up this prayer to her:

"Blessed Lady, keep watch over my life until it shall please God that I die, and when I am dead, ensure to me the possession of the joys of paradise."

II

Now on a certain evening after a dreary wet day, as Barnaby pursued his road, sad and bent, carrying under his arm his balls and knives wrapped up in his old carpet, on the watch for some barn where, though he might not sup, he might sleep, he perceived on the road, going in the same direction as himself, a monk, whom he saluted courteously. And as they walked at the same rate they fell into conversation with one another.

"Fellow traveller," said the monk, "how comes it about that you are clothed all in green? Is it perhaps in order to take the part of a jester in some mystery play?"

"Not at all, good father," replied Barnaby. "Such as you see me, I am called Barnaby, and for my calling I am a juggler. There would be no pleasanter calling in the world if it would always provide one with daily bread."

"Friend Barnaby," returned the monk, "be careful what you say. There is no calling more pleasant than the monastic life. Those who lead it are occupied with the praises of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints; and, indeed, the religious life is one ceaseless hymn to the Lord."

Barnaby replied—

"Good father, I own that I spoke like an ignorant man. Your calling cannot be in any respect compared to mine, and although there may be some merit in dancing with a penny balanced on a stick on the tip of one's nose, it is not a merit which comes within hail of your own. Gladly would I, like you, good father, sing my office day by day, and especially, the office of the most Holy Virgin, to whom I have vowed a singular devotion. In order to embrace the monastic life I would willingly abandon the art by which from Soissons to Beauvais I am well known in upwards of six hundred towns and villages."

The monk was touched by the juggler's simplicity, and as he was not lacking in discernment, he at once recognized in Barnaby one of those men of whom it is said in the Scriptures: Peace on earth to men of good will. And for this reason he replied—

"Friend Barnaby, come with me, and I will have you admitted into the monastery of which I am Prior. He who guided St. Mary of Egypt in the desert set me upon your path to lead you into the way of salvation."

It was in this manner, then, that Barnaby became a monk. In the monastery into which he was received the religious vied with one another in the worship of the Blessed Virgin, and in her honour each employed all the knowledge and all the skill which God had given him.

The prior on his part wrote books dealing according to the rules of scholarship with the virtues of the mother of God.

Brother Maurice, with a deft hand copied out these treatises upon sheets of vellum.

Brother Alexander adorned the leaves with delicate miniature paintings. Here was displayed the Queen of Heaven seated upon Solomon's throne, and while four lions were on guard at her feet, around the nimbus which encircled her head hovered seven doves, which are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gifts, namely, of Fear, Piety, Knowledge, Strength, Counsel, Understanding, and Wisdom. For her companions she had six virgins with hair of gold, namely, Humility, Prudence, Seclusion, Submission, Virginity, and Obedience.

At her feet were two little naked figures, perfectly white, in an attitude of supplication. These were souls imploring her all-powerful intercession for their souls' health, and we may be sure not imploring in vain.

Upon another page facing this, Brother Alexander represented Eve, so that the Fall and the Redemption could be perceived at one and the same time—Eve the Wife abased, and Mary the Virgin exalted.

Furthermore, to the marvel of the beholder, this book contained presentments of the Well of Living Waters, the Fountain, the Lily, the Moon, the Sun, and the Garden enclosed of which the Song of Songs tells us, the Gate of Heaven and the City of God, and all these things were symbols of the Blessed Virgin.

Brother Marbode was likewise one of the most loving children of Mary.

He spent all his days carving images in stone, so that his beard, his eyebrows, and his hair were white with dust, and his eyes continually swollen and weeping; but his strength and cheerfulness were not diminished, although he was now well gone in years, and it was clear that the Queen of Paradise still cherished her servant in his old age. Marbode represented her seated upon a throne, her brow encircled with an orb-shaped nimbus set with pearls. And he took care that the folds of her dress should cover the feet of her, concerning whom the prophet declared: My beloved is as a garden enclosed.

Sometimes, too, he depicted her in the semblance of a child full of grace, and appearing to say, "Thou art my God, even from my mother's womb."

In the priory, moreover, were poets who composed hymns in Latin, both in prose and verse, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and amongst the company was even a brother from Picardy who sang the miracles of Our Lady in rhymed verse and in the vulgar tongue.

III

Being a witness of this emulation in praise and the glorious harvest of their labours, Barnaby mourned his own ignorance and simplicity.

"Alas!" he sighed, as he took his solitary walk in the little shelterless garden of the monastery, "wretched wight that I am, to be unable, like my brothers, worthily to praise the Holy Mother of God, to whom I have vowed my whole heart's affection. Alas! alas! I am but a rough man and unskilled in the arts, and I can render you in service, blessed Lady, neither edifying sermons, nor treatises set out in order according to rule, nor ingenious paintings, nor statues truthfully sculptured, nor verses whose march is measured to the beat of feet. No gift have I, alas!"

After this fashion he groaned and gave himself up to sorrow. But one evening, when the monks were spending their hour of liberty in conversation, he heard one of them tell the tale of a religious man who could repeat nothing other than the Ave Maria. This poor man was despised for his ignorance; but after his death there issued forth from his mouth five roses in honour of the five letters of the name Mary (Marie), and thus his sanctity was made manifest.

Whilst he listened to this narrative Barnaby marvelled yet once again at the loving kindness of the Virgin; but the lesson of that blessed death did not avail to console him, for his heart overflowed with zeal, and he longed to advance the glory of his Lady, who is in heaven.

How to compass this he sought but could find no way, and day by day he became the more cast down, when one morning he awakened filled full with joy, hastened to the chapel, and remained there alone for more than an hour. After dinner he returned to the chapel once more.

And, starting from that moment, he repaired daily to the chapel at such hours as it was deserted, and spent within it a good part of the time which the other monks devoted to the liberal and mechanical arts. His sadness vanished, nor did he any longer groan.

A demeanour so strange awakened curiosity of the monks.

These began to ask one another for purpose Brother Barnaby could be indul so persistently in retreat.

The prior, whose duty it is to let noth escape him in the behaviour of his child in religion, resolved to keep a watch ov Barnaby during his withdrawals to chapel. One day, then, when he was s up there after his custom, the prior, acco panied by two of the older monks, went discover through the chinks in the what was going on within the chapel.

They saw Barnaby before the altar of Blessed Virgin, head downwards, with feet in the air, and he was juggling with balls of copper and a dozen knives. In honour of the Holy Mother of God he was performing those feats, which aforetime had won him most renown. Not recognizing that the simple fellow was thus placing at the service of the Blessed Virgin his knowledge and skill, the two old monks exclaimed against the sacrilege.

The prior was aware how stainless was Barnaby's soul, but he concluded that he had been seized with madness. They were all three preparing to lead him swiftly from the chapel, when they saw the Blessed Virgin descend the steps of the altar and advance to wipe away with a fold of her azure robe the sweat which was dropping from her juggler's forehead.

Then the prior, falling upon his face upon the pavement, uttered these words—

"Blessed are the simple-hearted, for they shall see God."

"Amen!" responded the old brethren, and kissed the ground.

White Moon

By PAUL VERLAINE

THE white moon
Gleams in the wood;
From every branch
Breathes a voice
Beneath the leaves. . . .

O well-beloved.

The pool reflects,
A mirror deep,
The silhouette
Of willows black
Where the wind weeps. . . .

Come: let us dream.

A tender, vast
Appeasement
Seems to descend
From the sky above,
From the rainbow stars. . . .

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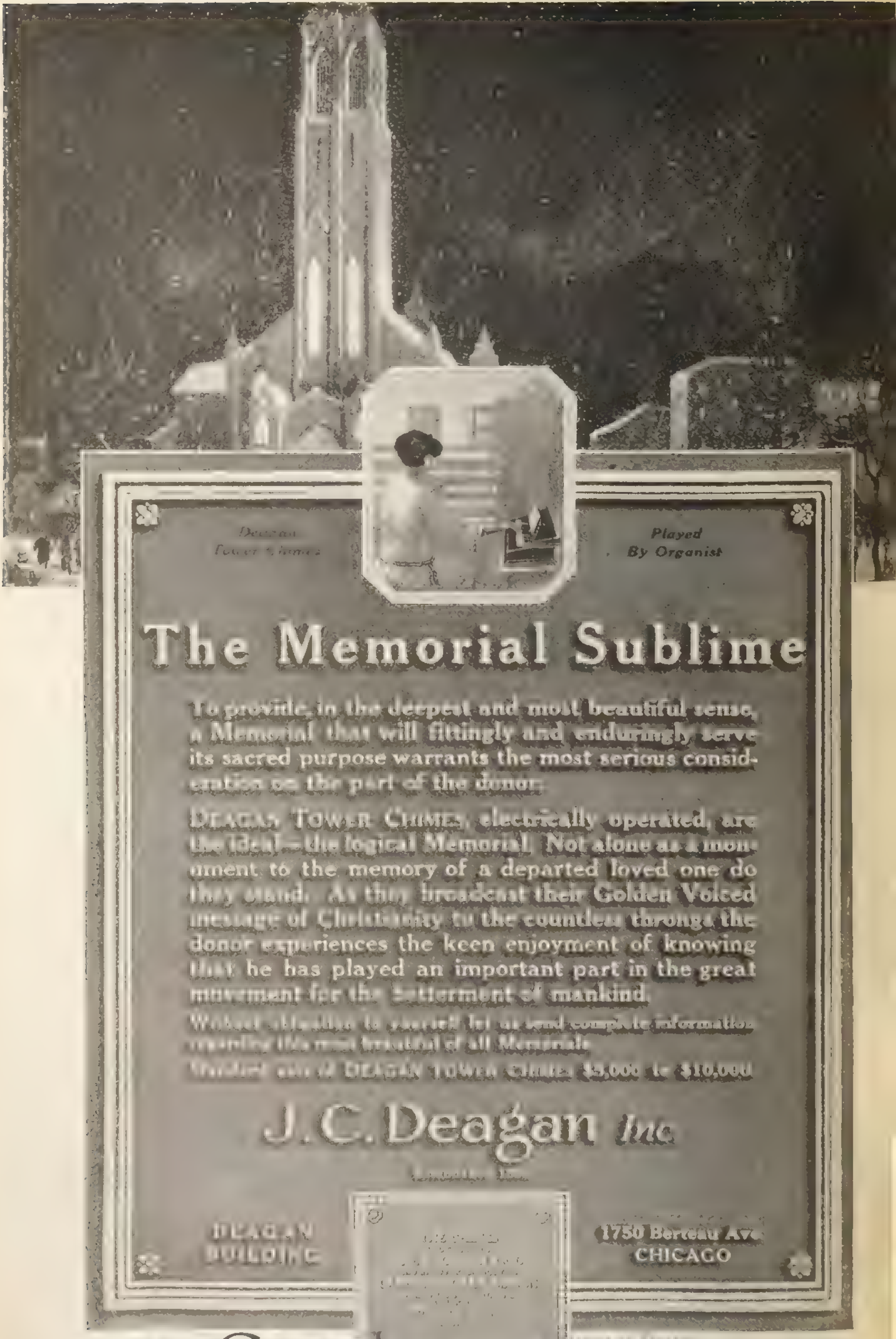
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Eng. Dept. E-2

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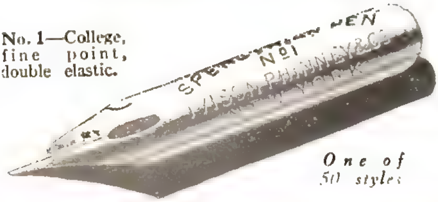

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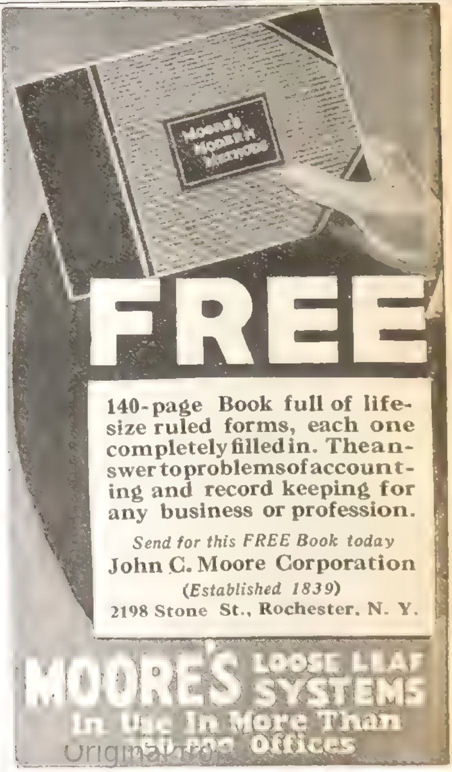

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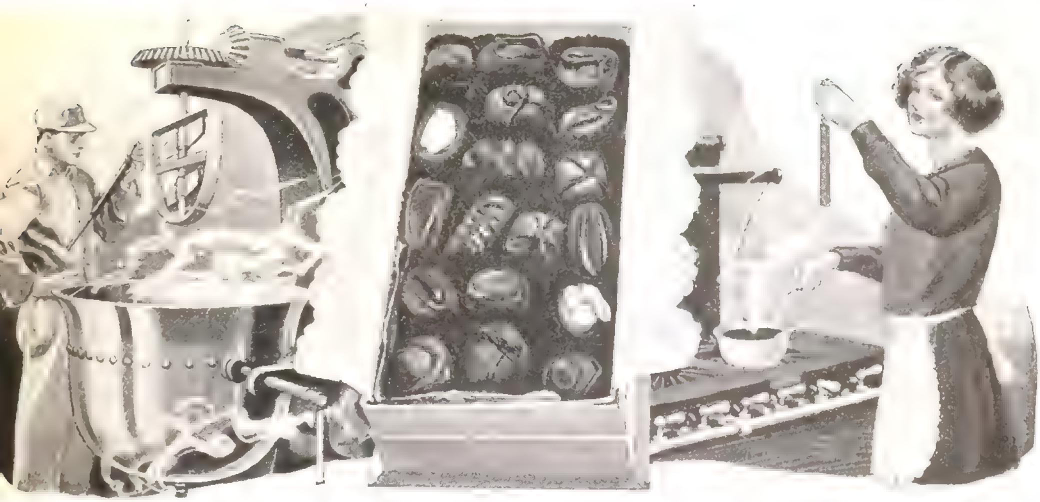

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Golden Ways To Golden Places

‘New Earths and Skies and Seas Around”

SO INTONED Thoreau, that American of Americans, in his passionate intensity of love for the wide spaces.

It is the cry today of most of us Americans—espe- lly in these nascent young spring days, when new ergy and new dreams combine to savor the places of rth still unknown to us. And, being a race of land- bers, the sea very particularly tempts us. A vision of he sprinkled isles that o'erlace the sea," as Browning rased it, fills us with a spring madness to travel; a ange sap-like urge fills our veins to go "far on the wild- ging sea," an urge which until the twentieth century but a few Americans were content to read about as ssessing others, but felt only faintly themselves.

But today is different. At our shores for bathing ve gathered millions more of us than knew the sea in st generations. We have listened to "the bass eternal the sea," along the thousands of miles of our sea- res, Atlantic and Pacific; the magic white sands of rida, on the gaunt rock-bound shores of Maine, l under the palms of Southern California. We have ked at the far horizons of these seas, and with the ater leisure of today has come an unbearable longing sail out into those horizons: east, west, south and rth. The rest of the world stands amazed at this ging of America for plowing furrows in the deeps, t the rest of the world does not understand that ericans, peculiarly, have been an inland, provincial ple, until now. The rest of the world has had to vel the seven seas to earn its living; America with wonderful resources has not. Today, then, Amer- ns travel for the pure joy of travel. The average eign traveller on the seas is bound for a port of de; the average American has joyously left trade ind. His kin-spirit as a traveller is not the blase ropean globe-trotter, but the ever-fresh, young- rted rovings of that ideal of all travellers, Pierre Loti, o with Gallic insight, appreciated every strange new n of the traveller's road; or Conrad, sailor-writer, who w all the portsof the world and loved them with a born veller's sense of value for color and line and tang. Such n, out of a fullness of companionship with the sea can what Keats could only imagine, metaphorically:

> ‘Much have I travelled in the realms of gold
> And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
> Round many western islands have been

or, again, Keats might verily have been speaking of the portholes of an up-to-date trans-atlantic liner when he coined that famous phrase:

> "Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam."

Surely no writer of a steamship-liner folder could ever hope to come within hailing distance of a phrase which, with such economy of words, presents such richness of delight at the life upon the open sea, so easy of access today to the traveller!

There are "realms of gold" and there are also "faery lands forlorn"—but every traveller from generous America is making such lands less forlorn. The American traveller is the most welcome guest in the whole wide world, anywhere and in all ports; nor is it for his spending, alone. He represents something to the inhabitants in most places which is, in a sense, the same thing they represent to the American traveller: stimulating variety and color, renewal of spirit. Both are mutually attracted.

Is it any wonder, then, that this year more Americans are turning their eyes upon travel upon the high sea—in whatever direction—than at any time in our whole history? Eager queries are being made about this or that country or route or plan of sojourn. The thrill of *preparation* for travel is in itself an important part of travel. Anticipation, the philosophers say, is chiefest of all joys; and assuredly it applies to travel perhaps more directly than to any other joy.

And travel is a joy to-day, even to the lovers of comfort or luxury. The staterooms of a modern vessel are really hotel rooms with no hint except the porthole that you are not in one of our up-to-date hotels. The service is on the whole superior to that of most hotels. There is a something—whether a superior discipline of a semi-military order, or just the romance of the sea—that makes those who serve sea travellers on modern vessels a little more interested in you than is one's usual lot at a land hostelry.

In fact there is an admitted general magic about everything that has to do with sea—even with mere books about the sea—that lifts them into a special favor. A journey by rail is a convenience; a journey by sea is a balm and an exhilaration. No one should deny himself plenty of it, whether for the mind's sake or the body's.

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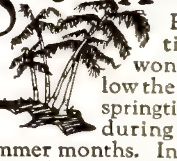

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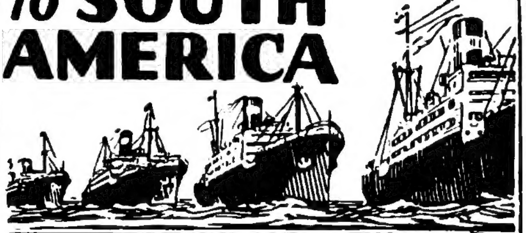

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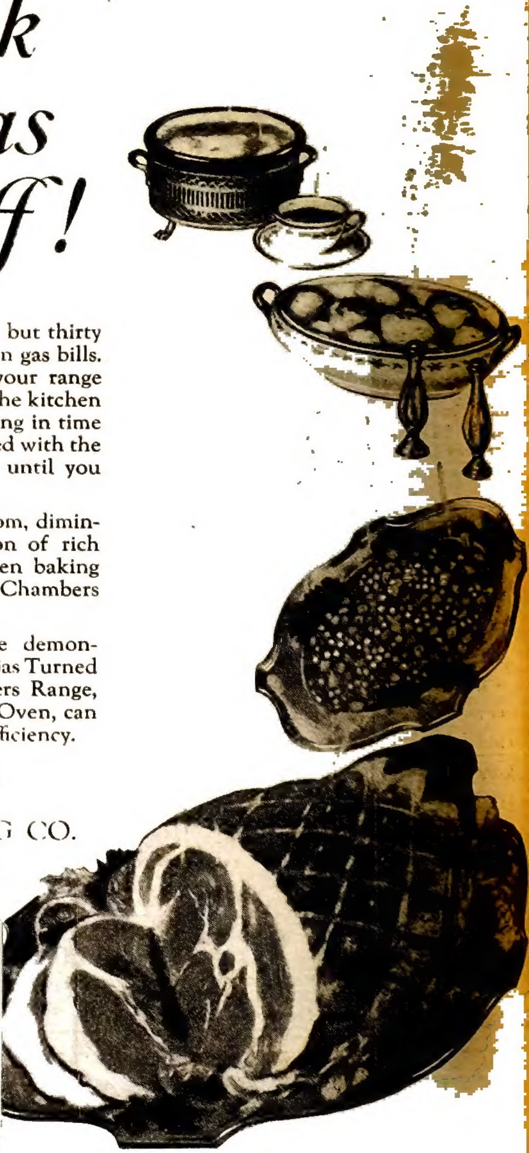

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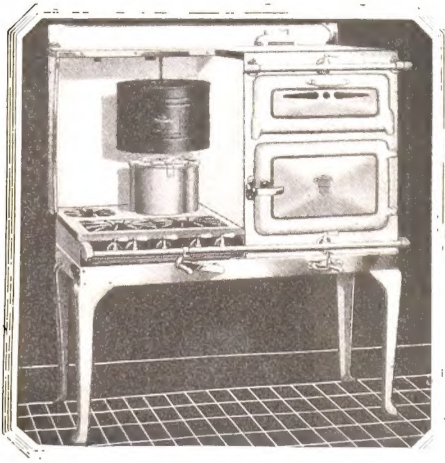

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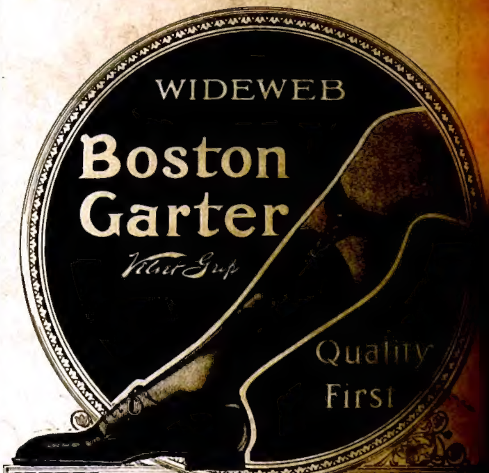

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